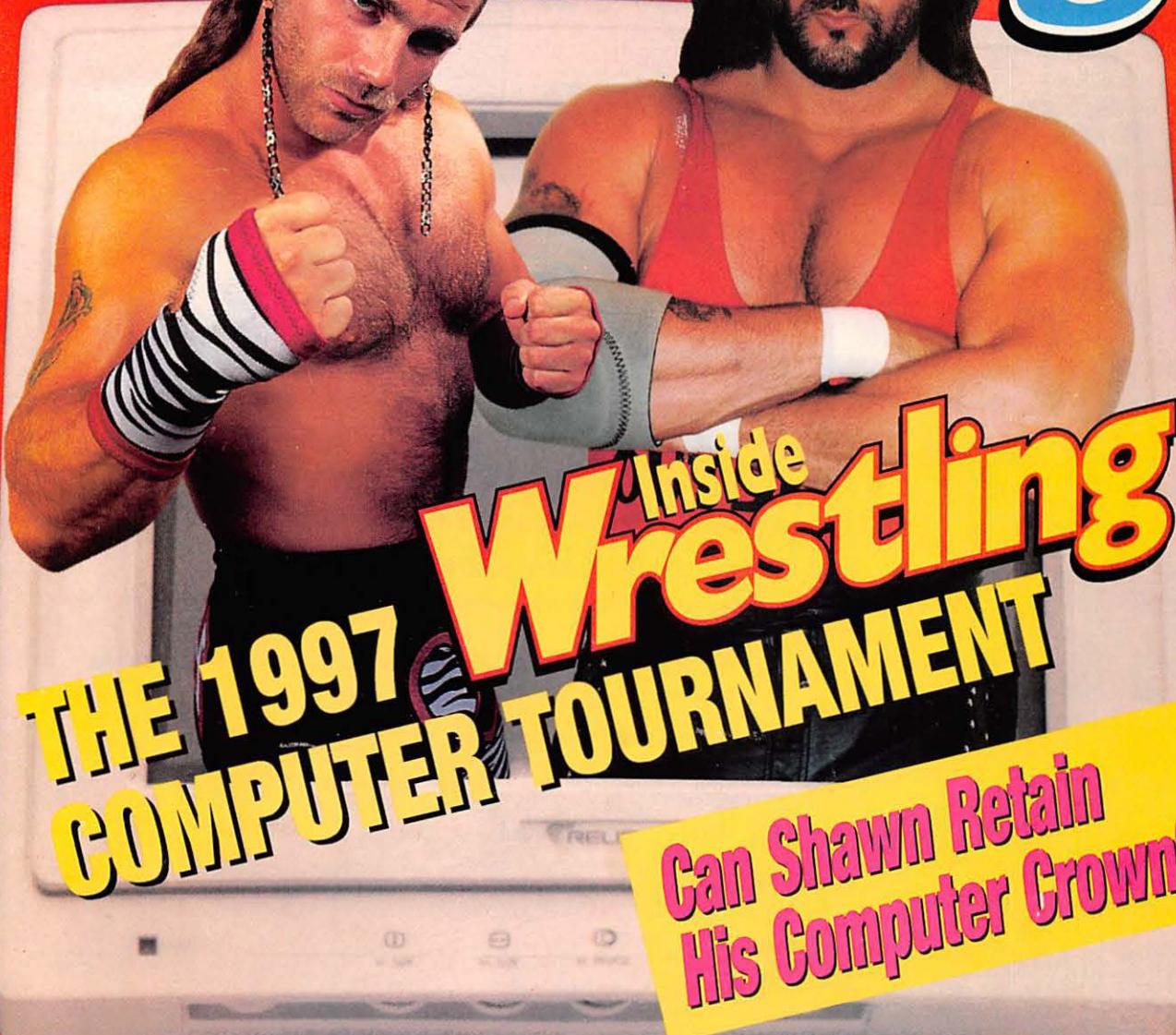


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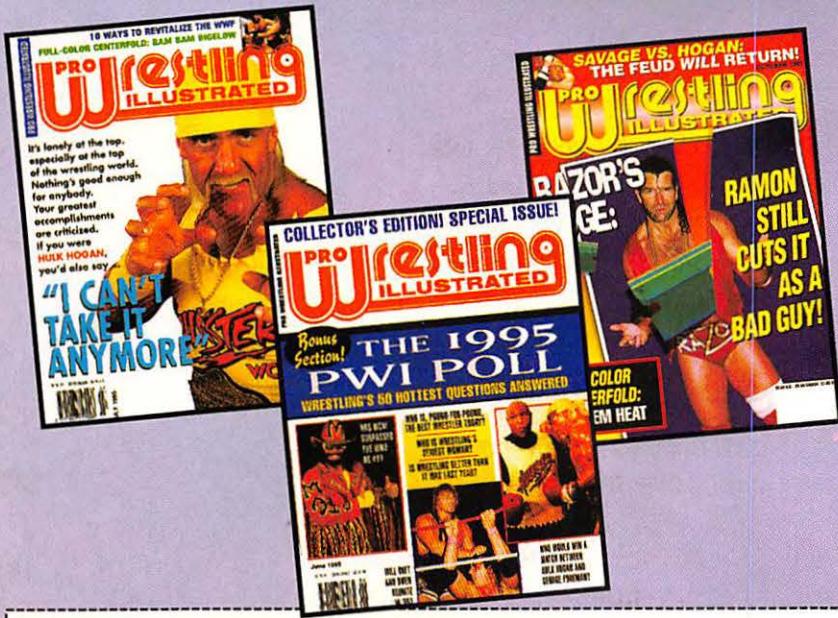
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# Inside Wrestling

THE MAGAZINE  
THAT RIPS THE LID  
OFF PRO WRESTLING

APRIL 1997

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KAREN

# Sincerely Yours

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## BRET'S THE MAN ...

How can anyone in his right mind not think Bret Hart is the most popular wrestler today ("You Settle It! Who's More Popular ... Bret Hart Or Shawn Michaels?", February 1997)? Bret has shown that he cares more about this sport than himself, unlike that punk Michaels. Bret has integrity and respect, which are two virtues

"The Heartbreak Kid" knows nothing about.

Bret definitely gets my vote!

PETE NOVERA  
Hendersonville, TN

## ... NO, SHAWN IS!

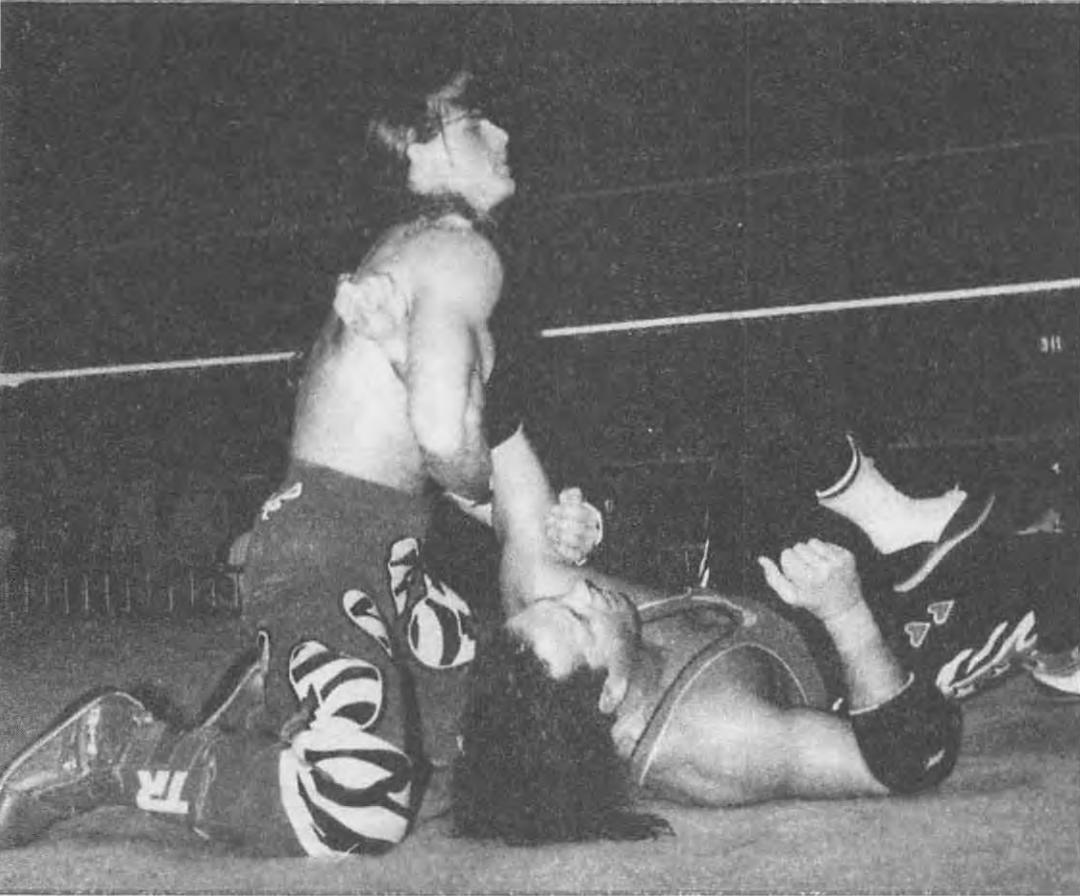
Shawn Michaels is without a doubt the best-looking and most talented wrestler in the world, bar none. Bret Hart can't hold a candle to Shawn's talent, both in the ring and out. Shawn didn't have his career handed to him by a famous father or by famous siblings. Shawn had to train hard to rise above mid-card status in the AWA and become the great wrestler he is now. Bret whines about how Shawn doesn't show respect toward the sport, yet Bret refuses to respect the sacrifices Shawn had to make to get where he is. It is because of these sacrifices that Shawn will always be number one in my book.

CANDI REBER  
Glens Falls, NY

*[Editor's note:  
Complete results of  
the Shawn vs. Bret  
popularity poll will  
appear in the May  
1997 issue of INSIDE  
WRESTLING.]*

## CRUISERWEIGHT CANDIDO?

After a modestly successful WWF stint, Chris Candido is indeed at a cross-roads in his career ("Bodydonna" Chris Candido: He's Lost Direction, But He Knows Where He's Headed! January 1997). Opting to accept a few dates with Extreme Championship Wrestling will only make him a better rulebreaker. Meanwhile, the rumored tour of Japan



Who's more popular, Shawn or Bret? We don't have the final results of our poll yet, but we can tell by the amount of ballots we've received so far that both wrestlers' fans are passionate about the issue.

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SENIOR WRITERS ..... David Rosenbaum

Andy Rodriguez

Steve Anderson

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PHOTO EDITOR ..... Jason Ross Lavin

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS ..... Matt Brock

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EDITORIAL ASSISTANT ..... Pushpak Naik

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Chris Candido drops an elbow on Spike Dudley during an ECW match. Reader Stan Lenkiewicz is happy to see him in ECW, but he thinks he could have a future competing in WCW's cruiserweight division.

could sharpen Candido's already superb technical skills.

It is Candido's long-term plans that lay in doubt. It is this reader's opinion that Candido's talents would be best appreciated in WCW. Since the creation of the cruiserweight division, WCW has highlighted magnificent stars like Rey Mysterio Jr., Eddy Guerrero, Dean Malenko, and Chris Jericho. Candido would make a welcome addition to this group.

STAN LENKIEWICZ  
Paramus, NJ

age that WCW or WWF has, but it has been the most influential promotion in the world despite the lack of a major cable outlet.

Just look at the current rosters in the WWF and WCW. Their top 10 ratings read like an ECW reunion tour. If ECW isn't the innovator of the sport, then why have "E-C-W! E-C-W!" chants been heard on almost every pay-per-view lately?

To deny ECW the status it deserves is denying these great athletes.

(Continued on page 70)

## RECOGNIZING STYLES

I agree with Joey Styles that ECW deserves to get world title status ("Hotseat," February 1997). Some of the toughest guys in the sport have held ECW's heavyweight belt, and I think it's time the federation got the proper recognition for that. ECW might not get the worldwide cover-



ECW play-by-play man Joey Styles interviews Raven and Stevie Richards. Reader Phil DeGregory agrees with Styles' assertion that ECW deserves world title status; reader Rebecca Longstein, however, does not.

## REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

Each year, the Holiday (or Winter) edition of INSIDE WRESTLING comes with a bonus calendar wrapped around its cover. What I generally do with that calendar is mark important events that happen during the course of the following year, so I can look back on those dates later on. In the calendar that came with the Holiday 1995 issue, I circled the date September 2. That was the day The Giant became a member of the NWO. I was sure I'd be referring back to that date, and here's why:

A couple of weeks later, while producing the Holiday '96 issue, I wrote the following about The Giant's turn for my "Reporter's Notebook":

"I see The Giant as someone who is used to having things his own way. The only man in the NWO who has that privilege is Hulk Hogan. The NWO has made a Giant mistake, and the group is going to pay a huge price for doing so."

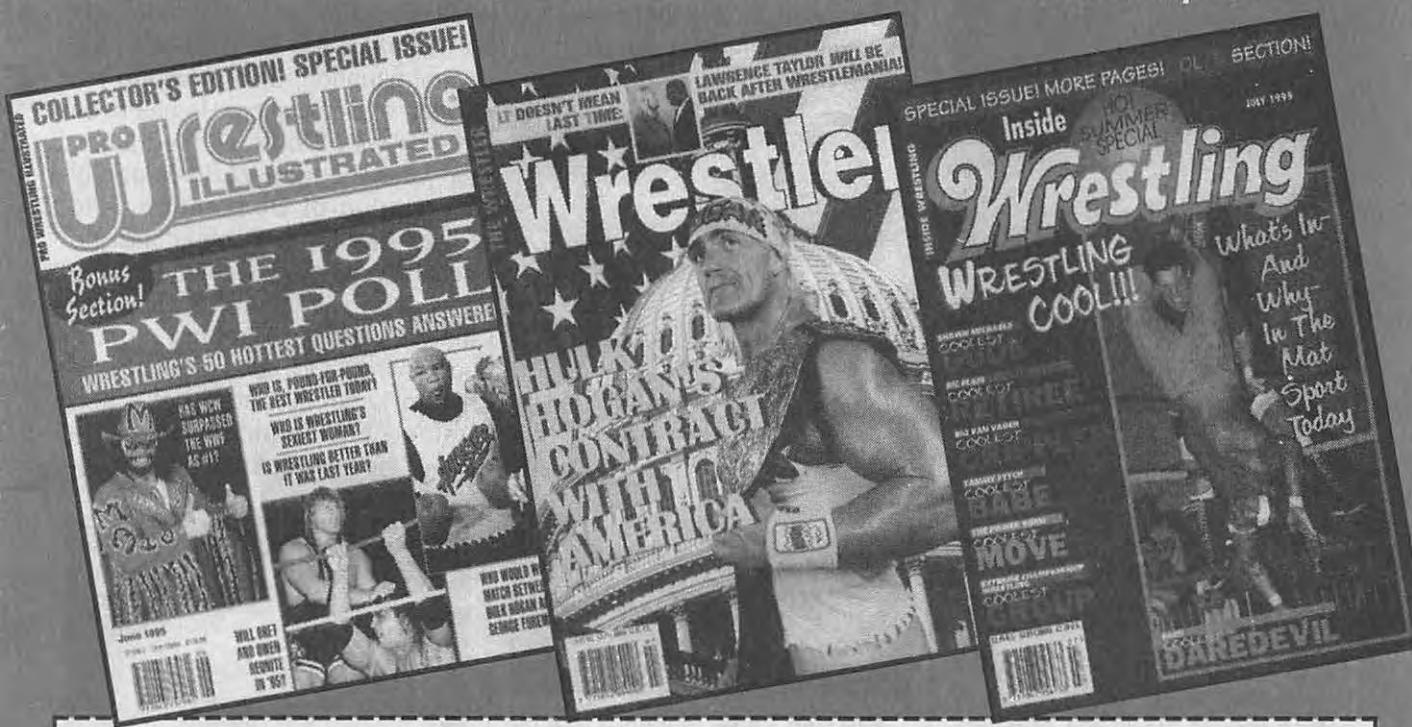
The NWO took a big gamble by signing The Giant. Given the personalities involved, they were surely aware that the arrangement might be short-lived. They figured, though, that in the NWO's formative stages, it would be a tremendous benefit to have The Giant on their side. The logic, while seemingly sound, is flawed. Ninety-percent of the NWO's value is its image. What could be worse for the image of the group than losing a recruit of The Giant's stature?

This defection sends a message of hope to WCW. The all-powerful NWO is beginning to experience its first growing pains. With all due respect to men like Jeff Jarrett and The Nasty Boys, it took a wrestler of The Giant's caliber to stand up to the NWO before other WCW wrestlers would have the guts to follow suit. Eric Bischoff's "30-day" threat has come and gone without incident, and the NWO is actually weaker today than it was just a short time ago.

My feeling is that somewhere on the calendar that came with your Holiday '96 issue of INSIDE WRESTLING, you'll have the opportunity to circle a day and mark the following: NWO disbands!

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# NAMES MA



THE GIANT

**F**URIOUS THAT HE was never granted his shot at the WCW World title after winning the three-ring battle royal at World War III, **The Giant** is out of the NWO. He returned to the WCW side after getting thrown out of the organization by **Hulk Hogan** the night after Starrcade.

"I was naive," The Giant confessed to me. "The NWO never planned to give me a title shot. No one knew that **Eric Bischoff** was NWO. Bischoff had the final say over whether I'd get my match or not. I was so impressed by the NWO and their promises of glory, I wasn't thinking straight. I feel like a real jerk, but at least I was smart enough to get out."

"My career was going so well," the former WCW World champion added. "I shouldn't have done anything to mess it up."

That, Giant, is what being a rookie is all about. Welcome back.

The Giant also told me that former WCW Commissioner **Nick Bockwinkel** called him to tell him

how disgusted he is by this situation, adding that he resigned because he had a feeling Bischoff was running a crooked operation and didn't want to get caught in the middle of it.



BIG VAN VADER

**Big Van Vader** is furious that his manager, **Jim Cornette**, has shelved plans to get him title shots. Vader, who has never been shy about airing his laundry in public, told me: "Cornette's ticked off that **Owen Hart** and the 'British Bulldog' still have the tag team belts, and he wants to find me a partner. I want the WWF title. I don't fight my manager's battles for him. If he keeps going in this direction, he'll be my former manager!"

Although **Mabel** and **Mo** hold the PWF tag team belts together, they are not talking to each other. "Mo has gotten deeply involved in the **Nation of Domination's** USWA branch," Mabel told me. "I don't want to associate with him. We won the belts before he was involved, and I thought I could talk him out of it. He won't hear of it. It's

real hard, because I can't team with someone I don't trust, and I don't trust Mo now. I might give up my half of the title."

USWA rookie **Blaze** is in an unusual situation, also involving the Nation of Domination. He has been friends with **Wolfie D**, his trainer, for years, but now Wolfie is part of the Nation of Domination, and Blaze has made it clear that he doesn't want any part of the organization. "Wolfie told me a few times that he's going to get me a prime spot in the NOD," Blaze said. "I told him to forget it, that I'll get a new trainer, but he stopped me. He vowed he'd never bring up the subject again."



RIC FLAIR

**Ric Flair** admits that **The Four Horsemen** are experiencing serious problems. "This is the most trouble-ridden group of Horsemen I have ever been associated with," he said. "I don't know if I can salvage this crew. **Debra McMichael** and **Woman**, you two are tearin' us apart. You've got to settle your problems or step aside!"

# KIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter

**Bruno Sammartino** has been doing color commentary for Pittsburgh's United States Championship Wrestling's TV broadcasts. Meanwhile, his son, **David**, is negotiating for future WCW matches ... **Perry Saturn** of **The Eliminators** brags that "as tough as **Kevin Nash** and **Scott Hall** claim to be, me and **John Kronus** could beat them without working up a sweat. Once you get past their huge egos, there ain't much left. Let them come to ECW if they're so tough" ... A lot of ECW fans, meanwhile, are demanding a one-on-one match between **Beulah McGillicutty** and **Francine** after seeing them clash



FRANCINE

briefly in mixed matches.

**Goldust** is chasing the Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling Americas title, which is currently held by **Lance Diamond** ... **Savio Vega** is competing part-time in Puerto Rico's WWA, where he has received several shots at WWF Intercontinental champ **Hunter Hearst Helmsley**. Vega has come

close to winning the belt, but Hunter saved his title by getting himself disqualified in almost every match.

World Wrestling Council Universal champion **Carlos Colon** is involved in a feud with a man named **Nene**. Most of their matches have been of the bloody barbed-wire variety ... **The Patriot**, who has competed mostly in Japan the last few years, has been sidelined for a few months due to surgery on his right elbow ... **Rambo** has regained Europe's CWA title from **Ludvig Borga**.



KONNAN

**Konnan** and **Eddy Guerrero** used to be very close allies when both wrestled primarily in Mexico, but now Konnan tells me he is disgusted that Guerrero is the WCW U.S. champ.

"Him holding the U.S. title is a joke," he said. "I knew him when he was tough, when he went into every match with the attitude that he would win no matter what it took. He's still got a lot of talent, but that attitude is missing. He probably

would have lost to **Dallas Page** in the finals of the tournament if the NWO didn't interfere. People won't remember him as a great U.S. champ."

Due to that neck injury **Billy Gunn** sustained in a match with his brother **Bart**, he will be confined to a wheelchair for an unspecified period of time ... **Bull Nakano** has



BULL NAKANO

challenged new WCW World Women's champion **Akira Hokuto**.

**Charlie Norris** and **Sam Houston**, known collectively as **The Renegades** in Texas' Continental Wrestling Alliance, want a shot at the tag team title, which is held by **High Voltage**, but they've been told they must first beat **The Colossal Kongs**. The Kongs used to weigh more than 800 pounds combined, but both have shed more than 100 pounds.

"We increased our speed and agility," **Awesome Kong** says.

"Also decreased our restaurant bills," **King Kong** adds.

That's all for now. I'll see you at the matches! □

THE WHOLE IDEA of traveling to Massachusetts recently was to check out Killer Kowalski, the legendary wrestler who was inducted into the WWF Hall of Fame back in November. In my four years with this company, I had never gotten the chance to spend an extended amount of time with the Killer, and that was going to change.

Kowalski has maintained his ties to wrestling and has trained numerous prospects, including current WWF Intercontinental champion Hunter Hearst Helmsley, but he was in the town of Webster so he could present ECW's newly made tag team championship belts to new champs The Eliminators (the Boston-based tag team that's doing better than any other local squad except the Patriots).

Well, as soon as Kowalski came out to make the presentation, he's attacked by hot-shot punk Brian Lee, who has been known to show no respect toward anyone, including

# ON THE ROAD

With Dave Lenker



Brian Lee (above) took it upon himself to beat up the legendary Killer Kowalski (top right) recently and later said, "I destroy legends." Did this attack do anything to further his career or enhance his reputation?

himself. His comment after attacking Kowalski spoke volumes.

"I destroy legends," Lee said.

And next up on his Hall of Fame tour? Terry Funk.

Lee hasn't done much lately except beat up on old men. He has slipped to No. 9 in the ECW ratings and is so far out of contention for the ECW heavyweight title, at press time held by Raven, that he isn't even considered for title matches. In fact, he isn't even interested in getting them. When word of Lee's "I destroy legends" quote got back to Philadelphia, home base of ECW, several wrestlers raised their eyebrows, and fans wondered what's gotten into Lee.

Commented Tommy Dreamer, one of his rivals: "He really has an inflated view of himself. An inflated view of Kowalski, too. The man was one of the best, he was a legend, but he doesn't even pretend to be a wrestler anymore. Him beating up Kowalski proves nothing."

Clean victories over Funk will help Lee in the ratings, simply because Funk has the name, but that's hardly going to be enough to convince ECW promoters. Although I hate to harp on it, that "I destroy legends" could live with Lee for a long time. Could follow him like a shadow, taunting him the way he deserves taunting.

Next thing you know, he'll be one-punching Muhammad Ali and proclaiming, "I destroy legends," or playing one-on-one basketball with Bob Cousy and saying he belongs in the NBA.

As for Kowalski, let's just say he was seriously appalled by Lee's behavior.

"I was there as a favor," Kowalski said. "Of course, it wasn't out of my way to be there, because I live pretty close, but it was something I did because The Eliminators are from around here and I was honored that the folks at ECW invited me. I don't know where Lee came from, but I do know this: If I was his age, I would've wiped the mat up with him. They'd have been picking his bones up from off the floor."

Kowalski noted, correctly, that beating up retired wrestlers seems to be all the rage these days. Ric Flair went after Randy Savage's father, Angelo Poffo, two years ago. Jerry Lawler had the guts to confront Stu and Helen Hart, the elderly parents of Bret Hart, back in '93. "Psycho" Sid Vicious whacked Jose Lothario with a TV camera when Lothario got on the

(Continued on page 72)



PRESENTS . . .

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# Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

**Y**OU, TOO, CAN be a professional wrestler. In fact, get a bunch of your friends together and your team could be even more powerful than the New World Order. In fact, dress one of your friends in tight jeans and a black wig and you can have your own Eric Bischoff.

According to the January 20, 1997, edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Weekly*, "Hulk Hogan

might have made a very stupid move when he booted The Giant out of the NWO and ordered all the other members of the group to beat him up during the December 30 *Nitro*."

Well, that wasn't his stupidest move.

His stupidest move was not telling them to beat up The Giant *all at once!*

That's right, folks, *all at once*, not *one at a time!*

Calling all members of the NWO! It doesn't make any sense to *take turns* beating up on a 7'4", 430-pound man. The whole idea of being a clique—a New World Order—is to use your advantage in numbers. Hasn't anybody in the NWO ever watched *The Three Musketeers*? Haven't they ever heard of "all for one and one for all"?

They did it again a week later at *Nitro*. The five billion members of the NWO surrounded The Giant in the ring, then came at him *one at a time!* Of course, The Giant had absolutely no problem holding off these brainless brawlers until they

got desperate and attacked him *all at once!*

But you know what's going to happen next time? They'll again attack him *one at a time* and take a bruising for a while.

And they'll do it for a very simple reason: As intelligent as some professional wrestlers might be, they just can't get over that macho ego thing. In the backs of their minds, they know it proves nothing when eight men beat up one man, so they try to do it the hard way first and beat him up *one at a time*. When that fails, self-preservation gets the better of valor.

What they don't realize is that it doesn't matter. They're the New World Order. They're rulebreakers. They're supposed to go about things the wrong way. That's how they got together in the first place. Hulk Hogan used to be a fan favorite. Now he's a rulebreaker. Bischoff was the senior vice president of WCW. Now he's the senior vice president of WCW and the head of the NWO. Hall and Nash were both fan favorites. Ditto Sting. Does he think that stupid

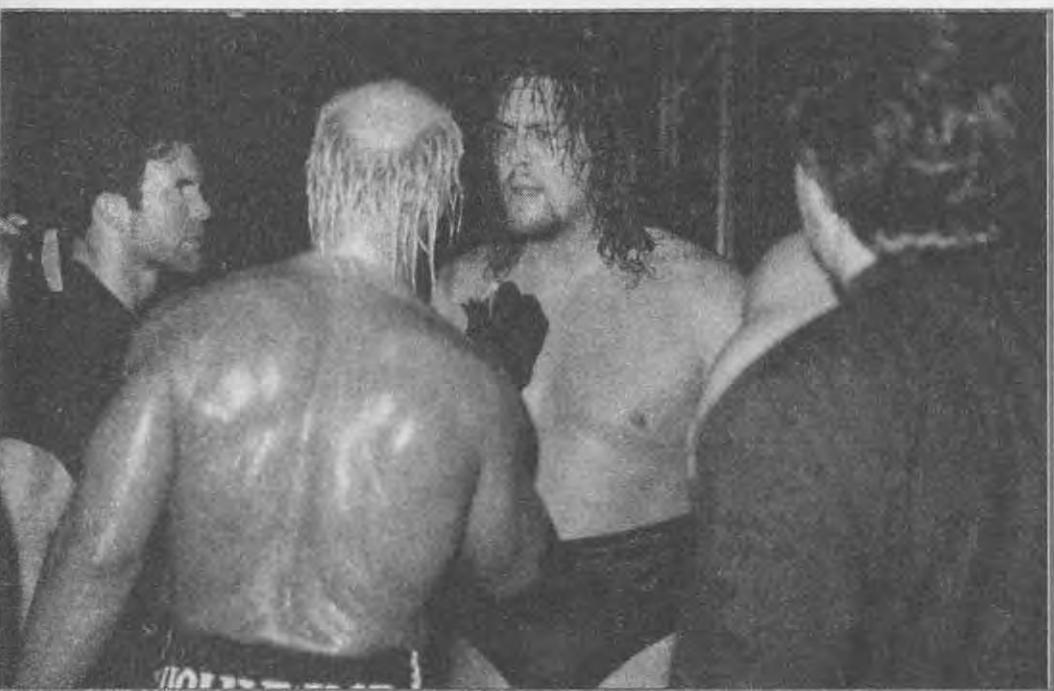
white face paint—every time I see him, I think of Marcel Marceau, the famous mime—makes anything different?

The NWO is a rule-breaking organization. Nobody's going to flinch if they use their power of numbers to beat up anyone who crosses their path.

As Mike Brady once said to his three children, three stepchildren, second wife, and housekeeper, "Separately, we can't move mountains. But together, we're a bunch!"

"Yeah!" the kids screamed. "The Brady Bunch!"

I'm not comparing  
(Continued on page 74)



One night before The Giant was booted out of the NWO, other members of the group confronted him angrily. Since they all know The Giant pretty well, they should have figured out by now that none of them can take him *one on one*.

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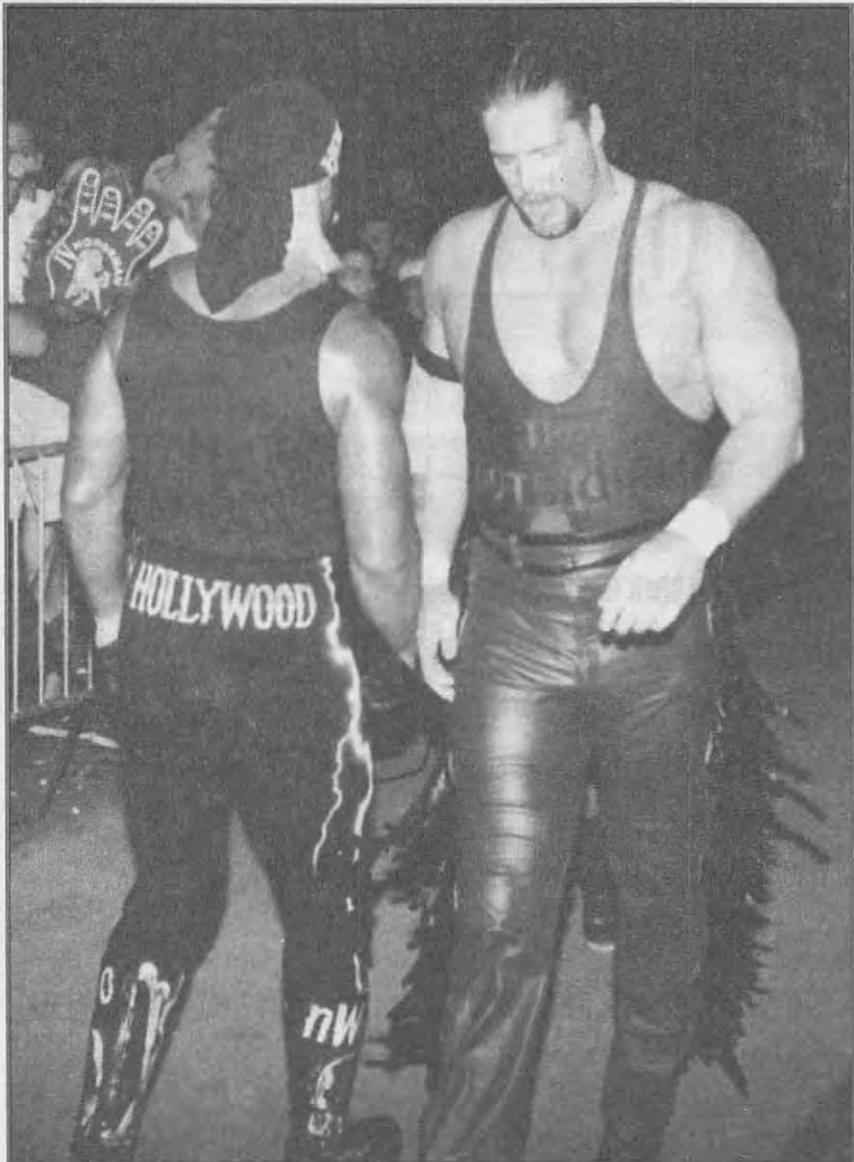
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# the Insider

by Brandi Mankiewicz

*(The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Brandi Mankiewicz alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.)*

**A**S I WRITE this column, the New World Order has been in existence for six long months. How time flies since that July day when Hulk Hogan added the "Hollywood"



Nine months ago, you probably couldn't have convinced me that Hulk Hogan and Kevin Nash would soon be the best of pals. Hogan has done a lot for the NWO, but the NWO could survive without him.

moniker and lost the neon yellow and red. A sad day for most. But a happy day for a select few, including yours truly.

But what if Hulk Hogan hadn't betrayed WCW at Bash at the Beach? What if his intentions in coming to the ring were to help WCW against Kevin Nash and Scott Hall? What would the NWO be like without Hulk Hogan?

Now most of you out there are assuming that the organization wouldn't have even existed without Hogan. I take exception to that. After all, it was Hall and Nash who started the ball rolling. Maybe Hogan coined the name, but the group would still have existed without him.

So Hogan cleans house at the Bash and causes Sting and Randy Savage to be disqualified. Hogan declares war on The Outsiders in an inspirational postmatch interview. No trash rains down on him. Just the cheers of all the remaining "Hulkamaniacs."

So Hall and Nash lead their NWO into battle. They still would have come up with Ted DiBiase and Six, I'm sure. And with DiBiase's wealth, they would likely have lured the same (motley) crew that they have right now, just sans Hogan. The Giant probably would have jumped over sooner since he wouldn't have had to overcome his hatred of Hogan. In fact, were it not for Hogan, The Giant would probably still be with the organization today. His recent turn away from the NWO has been building since the very day he put ink to contract.

As the leader of WCW, Hogan would have a red and yellow target painted on his behind courtesy of the renegade promotion. So in essence, Sting would have been somewhat spared. Perhaps the NWO would have gone so far as to create a faux "Hulk-

*(Continued on page 76)*

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# ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

EVERY YEAR, I eagerly await the arrival of the year-end issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* in my mailbox, but as I page through that March issue, I'm also usually overcome by a sense of dread.

Sure, it's fun to look back on the previous 12 months and at pictures of the winners of our awards, but as I do so I am reminded of the fact that it won't be long before my phone starts ringing, before at least a few wrestlers call to moan about not getting a year-end award.

For some reason, they can't

seem to remember that I have nothing to do with selecting the winners. They're voted on by the fans.

Once again this year, I circled the on-sale date on my calendar to remind myself of when the torture would begin.

Sure enough, less than a week after the issue hit the stands, my telephone rang. It was 8:03 a.m. I thought I was safe. After all, most wrestlers don't rouse themselves out of bed before noon. I picked up the phone, expecting to hear my mother's voice, or that of someone from London Publishing.

Instead, my "hello" was met with a string of profanity. No, it was not an obscene phone call. It was Steve Austin.

"Why, Steve," I answered sweetly after hearing words that would make a sailor blush. "Long time no hear. What can I do for you?"

Austin was not fooled by my phony sincerity. "You know damn well, Hunter!" he responded. "I saw that year-end piece of trash, and 'Stone-Cold's' name wasn't anywhere on those awards."

I knew that Austin must have realized that he hadn't won an award a few weeks earlier, when the pictures of the winners were taken. I foolishly brought up that argument. But Austin would not be deterred.

"Look, Hunter, I know the politics that goes with this, and I knew weeks ago that I wasn't getting one of those trash plaques," Austin ranted. "I'm taking exception to the people who supposedly won out over me."

I was torn between cutting off Austin and thus angering him even more, and further punishing myself by continuing to listen to his verbal diatribe. I chose option number two. I remember what happened when Brian Pillman ticked him off. Austin isn't above paying anyone a visit when he's angry.

"First of all, you should have retired that rookie award when I won it," Austin said. "There hasn't been a wrestler who has matched my success since that time."

Well, The Giant did have a pretty good first year.

"You give Comeback of the Year to that lush Jake Roberts,"

(Continued on page 78)



Steve Austin doesn't care if Goldust considers himself a fan favorite, rulebreaker, or something in between. He'll beat up anyone. He thinks he deserves more recognition in our magazines.

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Stan Hansen won the AWA World title by defeating which champion?

- 1) Rick Martel
- 2) Nick Bockwinkel
- 3) Curt Hennig
- 4) Verne Gagne

The largest crowd ever to witness a pro wrestling show (190,000) was in what city?

- 1) London, England
- 2) Toronto, Ontario
- 3) Pyongyang, North Korea
- 4) Tokyo, Japan

True or False: Hulk Hogan is the only wrestler to appear on the cover of Sports Illustrated

- 1) True
- 2) False

Which of the following cities did NOT host a portion of WrestleMania II?

- 1) Chicago, Illinois
- 2) Atlantic City, New Jersey
- 3) Uniondale, New York
- 4) Los Angeles, California

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Call as often as you like. The contest begins April 1, 1996 and runs through September 1, 1996. There is no age restriction to participate. The charge for each call is \$1.49 per minute in the United States, \$1.99 in Canada, and 39p (39p cheap rate) in the United Kingdom. The contest is sponsored by Advanced Telecom Services and London Publishing Co. in connection with Pro Wrestling Illustrated. No purchase necessary to participate. Void in MN, NJ, LA, GA, and where prohibited by law. All unclaimed prizes will be awarded via second-chance drawing. The odds of winning are dependent on the number of entries. Complete rules and mail-in entries are available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to PWI TRIVIA, P.O. Box 625, Devon, PA 19333, USA. To win, answer seven consecutive trivia questions correctly and you automatically qualify for the monthly drawing of one \$100\* winner. (\*Or for U.K. winners, the equivalent in pounds sterling at the time the winner is selected.) From April 1, 1996, until September 1, 1996, a total of 18 PWI six-issue subscriptions (retail value \$15 each) will be awarded. London Publishing Co. will select the winners. No substitutions allowed.

# INSIDE WRESTLING

# CAPSULE PROFILE

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## STEVE AUSTIN

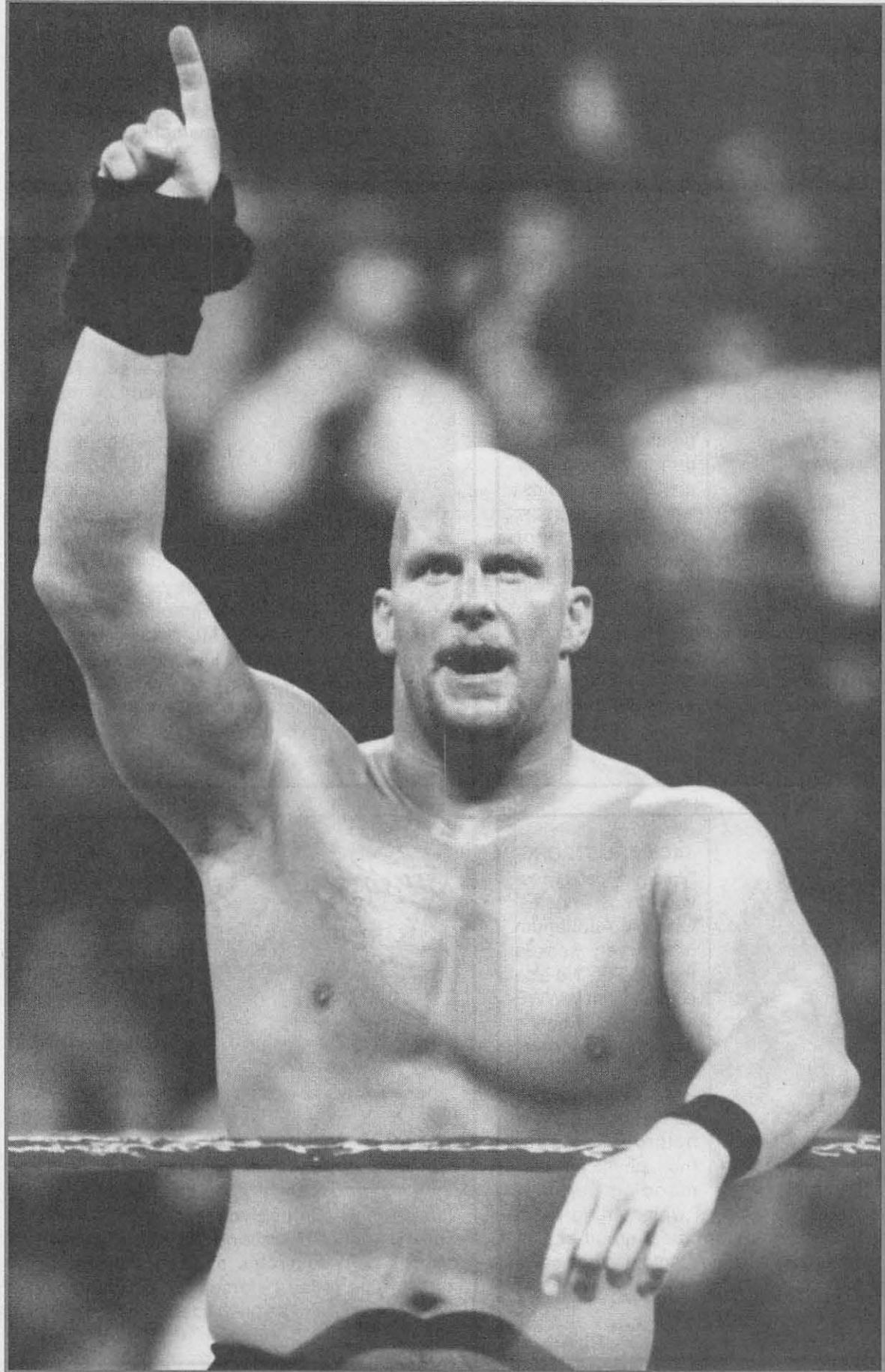
**B**RET HART MAY have beaten him at Survivor Series '96, but "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin vows to keep coming after "The Hitman" until he proves that he's the better wrestler. And some experts predict that when all the wars between Hart, Austin, Shawn Michaels, and "Psycho" Sid end, Austin will emerge as WWF champion (*"Those experts are right"*) ... The 6'2", 241-pound Dallas native was trained by Chris Adams and made his pro debut against Frogman Lablanc in 1989 ... Eventually befriended Adams' ex-wife, Jeannie, and they feuded with Adams and new wife Toni ... Voted Rookie of the Year for 1990 by PWI readers (*"Even stupid people get it right sometimes"*) ... He and Jeannie (Lady Blossom) arrived in WCW on May 31, 1991, and

Austin won the TV belt from Bobby Eaton six days later (*"Easy pickings"*) ... Joined Paul E. Dangerously's Dangerous Alliance a few months later and began feuding with Brian Pillman ... Helped Dangerously and Rick Rude attack Rick Steamboat at Clash of the Champions XVIII; Steamboat went on to beat Austin for the TV belt at Clash XX (*"He was always too good for his own good"*) ... He and Pillman began teaming in October 1992, and five months later, they defeated Steamboat and Shane Douglas for the WCW World tag title (*"Pillman found a partner to carry him"*) ... After Pillman fractured his ankle, Austin and substitute partner Lord Steven Regal lost the belts to Arn Anderson and Paul Roma ... Signed with Col. Robert Parker and turned against Pillman when Pillman refused to do the same (*"Bottom line is Pillman isn't too smart"*) ... Beat

Dustin Rhodes for the U.S. title at Starrcade '93 and did well in matches against Steamboat ... Finally lost the belt to Steamboat in a no-DQ match at Clash XXVIII, but Steamboat suffered what turned out to be a career-ending back injury in that bout ... Austin was awarded the title by forfeit at Fall Brawl '94, then lost it to substitute opponent Hacksaw Duggan in 27 seconds (*"Obviously a conspiracy"*) ... Suffered a serious knee injury and missed several months ... Became a forgotten man in WCW when he returned, so he left for ECW (*"The greatest superstar that place ever saw"*) ... Suffered losses to both The Sandman and Mikey Whipwreck before joining the WWF as the "Ring Master" under Ted DiBiase's tutelage ... Used DiBiase's old Million-Dollar Dream as a finisher, but soon went back to his own name ... DiBiase was forced to leave the WWF after Austin lost a Caribbean strap match to Vega in May (*"He was useless"*) ... Beat Roberts in the finals of the '96 King of the Ring tournament with his new finisher, the "Stone-Cold stunner" (*"The old man never stood a chance"*) ... Soon began daring Bret Hart to come back to face him ... Turned against his "friend" Pillman in November and even broke into his house to try to attack him (*"I don't need friends"*) ... Dominated his match with Bret at Survivor Series but lost by pinfall ... Recently defeated Michaels by pinfall several times ... Bottom line is that Steve Austin is one of the most dangerous rulebreakers in the WWF (*"I'll beat up anyone"*). □



Austin wears down Goldust with a rear chinlock. Austin has feuded with both fan favorites and rulebreakers in the WWF of late. Beating Bret Hart, however, remains his number-one obsession.



# STEVE AUSTIN

# Where Are They Now?

Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



## RENO RIGGINS

Riggins, who has experience in just about every major organization (and quite a few independents, too) is getting ready to return to the ring after an 18-month hiatus. "I hung up the boots right before I got married to my bride, Tracey," Reno told us. "I didn't want to

be on the road and away from her all the time, so I started working with my father at his auto sales and repair business. When I do come back, I'll wrestle mainly near my home in Tennessee."



## DENNIS STAMP

Using a style that resembled that of Terry Funk, he had success in Texas, California, and the AWA, but Stamp is now retired and living in Amarillo, where he operates a construction business. "I miss the good ol' days," he says, "especially the mid-'70s, when

I feuded with Moose Morowski and Les Thornton. With Morowski, it was always a brawl. With Thornton, it was hold vs. hold. What great technical wrestling matches we had then. You don't see enough of that now."



## JACK ARMSTRONG

"Wildman" Jack wrestled at Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium nearly every week in the mid-'70s. He also competed on WWWF shows. Today he's a personal trainer at Venice Beach's Gold's Gym, where he has helped many actors tune up for their physically demanding careers.

Jack also trains a women's weightlifting team called Steel Cats. "What I'm most proud of," he says, "is the training of Jason Conto. He has cerebral palsy, but has won 17 competitions in special events."



## J.J. DILLON

After spending years as a WWF executive, Dillon left the organization in September and later accepted a job as a consultant for World Championship Wrestling. Most fans remember Dillon's days in the NWA, where he managed maybe the most successful

version of The Four Horsemen ever (Ric Flair, Tully Blanchard, Arn Anderson, and Ole Anderson). He has no plans to get back into managing. "I hope today's Horsemen can straighten themselves out and be great again," he says.

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# NEWS FROM THE

NASHVILLE, TN  
BY SCOTT LARSON



**BILL DUNDEE  
VS.  
J.C. ICE**



Bill Dundee wanted to not only beat his son, but also give him a wrestling lesson. He succeeded in doing both. Bill controlled much of the bout using toeholds, armlocks, and headlocks. Each time Ice locked on a hold of his own, it seemed, Dundee would reverse it. Wolfie D helped out his friend by interfering on several occasions, but when he charged into the ring at one point, the referee disqualified Ice.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Blaze defeated Tony Falk ... Brickhouse Brown defeated Kareem Olajuwon by disqualification ... Flash Flanagan & Steven Dunn wrestled Mike Samples & Vic the Bruiser to a no-contest ... Sir Mo beat Dutch Mantel ... USWA Southern champion Wolfie D defeated Brian Christopher ... Brian Christopher, Bill Dundee, Dutch Mantel, Brickhouse Brown, Steven Dunn, & Mabel defeated PG-13, Mo, Kareem Olajuwon, Akeem Mohammad, & Mike Samples in a concession stand rumble.

BAUNATAL, GERMANY  
BY STEPHEN RAUMAHN



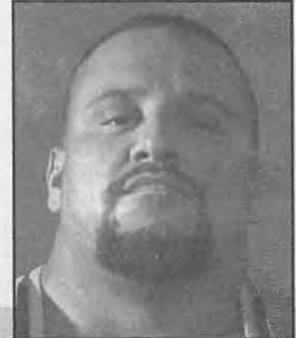
**SIX  
VS.  
THE BOOTY MAN**



Six took full advantage of an opportunity to humiliate a former friend of fellow NWO member Hulk Hogan in a bout at Rundsporthalle. Six was seconded by Vincent, and he helped Six beat on Booty throughout the match. In the beginning, Vince held Booty while Six pounded on him. As Six went for a dropkick, though, Booty ducked and Six nailed Vince! Booty then went on the offensive, dazing Six with a kneedrop and covering him, but referee Nick Patrick feigned neck pain and never finished the three-count. Later, Six grabbed a pair of brass knuckles from Marcus Bagwell, punched Booty Man, and covered him for the win.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Big Bubba Rogers defeated Disco Inferno ... Marcus Bagwell & Scotty Riggs defeated Public Enemy ... Eddy Guerrero pinned Chris Benoit ... Glacier defeated Mortis ... Alex Wright & Lex Luger beat Harlem Heat when Wright pinned Booker T.

PHILADELPHIA, PA  
BY ZACH ERMERT



**TAZ  
VS.  
ROB VAN DAM**



Taz said before the match that Van Dam would be his next victim. And although Van Dam tried his best not to succumb to him, Taz eventually won with his "Tazmission." Taz wasn't always in control, though. Van Dam nailed him with great moves such as a single leg dropkick and a top-rope flip. Taz, however, countered with a series of quick, hard suplexes and the "Tazmission." Van Dam tried to bridge his way out of it, but instead wound up unconscious and on the losing end.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Spike & Bubba Ray Dudley defeated David Jericho & Little Guido ... B. Mahoney beat Devon Storm ... Gary Albright beat Rick Rage ... Brian Lee beat Louie Spicoli ... ECW tag team champs The Gangstas defeated D-Von Dudley & Axl Rotten ... Shane Douglas & Francine beat Tommy Dreamer & Beulah McGillicutty ... Sabu defeated Perry Saturn ... Raven beat ECW heavyweight champ The Sandman in a barbed-wire match to win the title.

# WRESTLING CAPITALS

READING, PA  
BY NICHOLAS KEMP



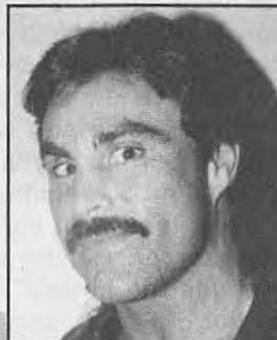
**JULIO SANCHEZ  
VS.  
CHEETAH MASTER**



This Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling bout was supposed to feature just Sanchez and Cheetah, but Judd the Stud, Sanchez' manager, made sure that his man had help. The pace of the match was fast, as both men kept countering each other's moves. Finally, Cheetah climbed to the top rope and hit Sanchez with a splash, but the referee was distracted by Judd. Mark Mest and Ace Darling then distracted Cheetah, allowing Julio to attack and pin him.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Ace Darling & Mark Mest beat PCW tag team champs Double Delight to win the title ... Lance Diamond pinned Pat Shamrock ... Little Louie pinned King Sleazy ... Maxx Crimson beat Boogie Woogie Brown by disqualification ... Lance Diamond captured the PCW Americas title by winning a reverse battle royal cage match ... Mr. Ooh La La defeated Troy Mest ... PCW heavyweight champ Freight Train Jones beat Chef D.Z. Gillespie ... Vinnie Biondo beat Romeo Catino.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL  
BY SALLY BUTTERMAN



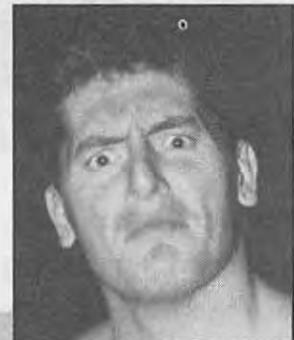
**MARC MERO  
VS.  
HUNTER HEARST  
HELMESLEY**



Mero has been trying very hard to get the Intercontinental title back, but Goldust showed at In Your House XII that he has his eye on the gold, too. Helmsley and Mero battled inside the ring, exchanging moves and punches. Hunter later used Sable as a shield outside the ring before ramming Mero into the ring steps. Both then scored near-falls before Goldust came to ringside and whacked both with the I-C belt. Only Mero made it back into the ring before the referee counted to 10.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Rocky Maivia beat Salvatore Sincere by disqualification ... Braccus defeated Dr. X ... Steve Austin pinned Goldust after Hunter Hearst Helmsley interfered ... Shawn Michaels pinned Mankind ... Flash Funk defeated Leif Cassidy ... WWF World tag team champs Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith beat The New Diesel & Razor Ramon ... The Undertaker pinned The Executioner in an Armageddon match ... WWF World champ Sid Vicious pinned Bret Hart.

PENSACOLA, FL  
BY HARRY ZARK



**LORD STEVEN REGAL  
VS.  
PSICOSIS**



Regal, the current WCW TV champion, defeated Psicosis by submission to retain the title. Regal used his terrific mat skills to remain in control for most of the match. He never seemed fazed by Psicosis' outstanding high-flying skills, as the Mexican sensation was only able to take to the air a few times. Regal even recovered fairly quickly after Psicosis executed a magnificent top-rope splash on him. He finally beat him with his "Regal stretch."

**OTHER BOUTS:** Big Bubba Rogers beat Chavo Guerrero Jr. ... Chris Jericho beat Masa Chono by disqualification ... Dean Malenko pinned David Sammartino ... Ice Train (with Teddy Long) defeated Jerry Flynn ... Rey Misterio Jr. defeated Bobby Eaton ... Kevin Sullivan (with Jimmy Hart) pinned Arn Anderson ... Rick Steiner wrestled Sting to a no-contest ... WCW World tag team champions Scott Hall & Kevin Nash defeated The Barbarian & Meng in a non-title match.



## Matt Brock's Plain Speaking

**Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist.**

**Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor**

**W**hen you stand 7'4" and weigh 430 pounds, it doesn't take a lot of guts to stand up to people. That's not what was impressive about The Giant standing up to the New World Order and taking them on, one by one, tonight and a few other times. The impressive part was a second-year man, a baby in sports terms, deciding he wasn't going to go with the flow. Take Lex Luger. Eleven years ago, he was the hottest ticket coming out of Florida wrestling, but when he started believing his own press clippings, he made the mistake of taking the easy route and joining The Four Horsemen. Nearly destroyed his career. Luger ended up in a group in which he was the number-four man and didn't have a chance of ever usurping Ric Flair, the real reason the Horsemen existed in the first place. But by the time Luger got free of the Horsemen, he had nearly ruined his career. Some might say he still hasn't recovered, although Luger's carved out a pretty good career for himself.

**MONROE, LA**

Same thing could've happened to The Giant if he had stayed with the NWO. There wasn't a chance of The Giant ever being the big man in the group, not as long as Hulk Hogan was around, and it's a good thing he finally realized it. Now he could end up teaming with Roddy Piper, who is in this for the short run and, if they do get together, would pull out as soon as he thought The Giant had the situation under control. Of course, staying with the NWO would have been easy, if only because he would've been protected. But what does a man like The Giant need with protection? He's a big kid who can handle himself. Now let's see if Hogan can handle The Giant, because if he can't, he's going to realize that not keeping him happy was the worst mistake he ever made.

**CHICAGO, IL**

**T**he Honky Tonk Man might want to manage Jesse James, which makes some people laugh but should get them thinking. Honky Tonk Man is still the longest-reigning WWF Intercontinental champion of all-time, a fact made all the more notable

because he's arguably the least-talented I-C champion of all-time. Don't know about you, but I'd take Rick Steamboat, Randy Savage, Pedro Morales, Don Muraco, Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels, Razor Ramon, Diesel, and even Hunter Hearst Helmsley ahead of him in the bat of an eyelash. Pretty good company Honky Tonk Man found his way into, and it wasn't as if he won the belt and lost it a few days later. He held it for nearly 15 months. Why? "I hate to say this, because I didn't have much respect for the man, but he was one of the smartest wrestlers I've ever faced," Steamboat



THE HONKY TONK MAN

said. "He didn't have much in the way of raw ability, but he obviously did his homework and figured out a way to win each match. Maybe he didn't go about it in the most ethical way, but he found ways to win—or at least not lose the belt." Now if you're thinking what I'm thinking, that sounds like the kind of man who would make a good manager. They say the great athletes never make great managers, while the mediocre ones, the men who always had to plug for a living, make the best because they had to learn so much about the sport just to survive. Honky Tonk Man might be a little odd—he can keep that singing and dancing act, because it doesn't belong in the ring, anyway—but he's cut out for the job.

**B**ill Dundee's beating up his son, J.C. Ice, in the middle of the ring, and you know that doesn't make either man feel very good. "It's not something I wanted to do," Dundee said shortly after refusing to join the Nation of Domination, of which his son is a member. "But it looks to me like Jamie's lost his way, and maybe he needs to be knocked back on the right track. Thing is, I'd like to stay out of these matches as much as possible." So would J.C. Ice, who pleaded, "He got himself into this. We could have avoided this. But maybe the old man's lost his marbles. He had a great chance to join the Nation, and he passed it up. Why'd he do that?" The answer is integrity and self-respect, which obviously wasn't passed along from father to son. Good reason why I never had a kid. Never know how they're gonna turn out, and maybe one day they break your heart. It's just not worth it, and if you have any doubts, just ask Bill Dundee.

## NASHVILLE, TN



JUSHIN LIGER

**D**ropped by the editorial offices, which is always a bad move, and still couldn't get over the sight of my niece Brandi Mankiewicz sitting behind a desk and editing stories instead of fetching coffee for the publisher or maybe buying a nice little birthday gift for Stu Saks' wife. Just doesn't fit, but I'll tell you this much: In the days when editors used pencils and paper instead of computers, a woman never would've made it in that job. Use a pencil to edit a

## AMBLER, PA

story and something has to come from your gut, from your heart, and it can't have anything to do with shopping or finding the right man. Then ran into Stu Saks, who asked, "Matt, why aren't you in Japan?" He wanted me to go to Japan to cover Jushin Liger's match against Ultimo Dragon, but I refused, claiming the last time I went to Japan, I got dysentery. Then he told me that Liger beat Dragon and won eight of his nine titles. Not bad for a man who recently underwent brain surgery, but there'll be other stories, other days. □

# THE INSIDE WRESTLING



**I**T IS, WITHOUT a doubt, the most anticipated wrestling event of the year, after WrestleMania and Starrcade. Okay, maybe that's a stretch. But the INSIDE WRESTLING Computer Tournament does present the sport in its purest and best form, with the greatest wrestlers from each federation meeting in the ring. Politics make it impossible in real life. Imagination—and modern technology—make it possible within the pages of this magazine.

No managers, no outside interference or meddling federation officials, no announcers who decide to get involved or valets

flashing what they have no business flashing. The INSIDE WRESTLING Computer Tournament is wrestling as it was meant to be.

The computer we used this year was based on a Pentium 200-MHZ processor with 128 megabytes of RAM, a three-gig hard drive for storage, and Windows 95 as the operating system. Our computer expert completely reworked last year's program, taking advantage of the latest technology available while retaining the best aspects of previous programs.

The new program takes into account every possible factor, including records, quality of oppo-

**FIRST ROUND****STING****THE GIANT****BRET HART****CHRIS BENOIT****HULK HOGAN****KEVIN NASH****STEVE AUSTIN****HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY****QUARTERFINALS****SEMIFINALS****CHAMPI**

# COMPUTER TOURNAMENT 1997

sition, stamina, offense, defense, scientific skills, ability to adjust to opponents, cumulative effects of injuries suffered in previous tournament matches, and prior meetings. The computer wrestlers even had the ability to learn about their opponents and adjust. However, for the first time, we wiped out such factors as air travel and home-ring advantage so that every wrestler would be on an even playing field.

The 1997 tournament has a star-studded lineup. First-round losers in the 1996 tournament were excluded from the competition. They are as follows: Jeff Jarrett, Sid Vicious, Randy

Savage, Eddy Guerrero, Dan Severn, Sabu, Lex Luger, and The Undertaker. Michaels, last year's winner, received an automatic bid.

The field of 16 includes a who's who of wrestling. Every possible style of wrestling was accounted for, and the tournament had an international flair with Kobashi representing Japan, and Mysterio representing the masked Mexican school of wrestling.

We then programmed the computer to randomly select a bracket for a single-elimination tournament with best-of-seven-match series; the matches were held at the rate of one per day in each round. Each match was fought to

submission or pinfall. Each wrestler came into the series totally healthy.

Thanks to a new computer chip, this year's program enabled us to see all the matches on screen in incredible digital 3-D graphics. We can't wait to see what technology brings us next: Perhaps next year we'll have actual computer likenesses of the wrestlers competing in the middle of our office!

We look forward to then. But for now, sit back and enjoy an incredible fantasy flight. Let the matches begin!

## SEMIFINALS

## QUARTERFINALS

## FIRST ROUND

**ONSHIP**



**DALLAS PAGE**

**SHAWN MICHAELS**

**TAZ**

**KENTA KOBASHI**

**FLASH FUNK**

**RAVEN**

**REY MISTERIO JR.**

**SCOTT HALL**

# STING vs. THE GIANT



## FIRST

Two familiar foes drew each other in a first round match-up that doesn't quite tease the imagination, simply because they've met so many times in the past. The Giant defeated Sting numerous times while he was WCW World champ last spring and summer. Sting definitely gave the 7'4", 430-pound monster some incredibly tough matches, but he has yet to defeat him cleanly.

Would this change in our tournament?

The series started slowly with The Giant stalking Sting and Sting trying to keep a distance from his much larger opponent. As the pace quickened in the early moments, it became clear The Giant would have a hard time keeping up with Sting, who decided to go after the big man's legs. The tactic worked, and with 12:03

gone in the first bout, Sting won by submission with his Scorpion deathlock.

But The Giant didn't plan on going quietly, and he continually frustrated Sting in the next two matches, using quick, hard strikes and taking advantage of his drastic edge in size.

The Giant used a series of clotheslines to weaken Sting midway through the fourth match, but Sting had plenty of energy on this night, using dropkicks and a reverse DDT to keep Giant off balance. He won the fourth match, and the fifth match, too, by taking the matches into the 20th minute before scoring the pin.

But in match six, Sting got hurt early when he tried a dive through the ropes and landed elbow-first on the hard arena floor. Staggered, Sting was hardly a match for Giant the rest of the way and succumbed early, in the sixth minute.

So it came down to the deciding match. Most of Sting's matches are pointed toward the Scorpion deathlock, and doing so usually involves attacking with suplexes, aerial moves, and maybe a "Stinger



If he is able to execute a "Stinger splash," Sting is usually victorious, but in this series, he was never able to use the move.

splash" or two. But there was none of that, because The Giant wouldn't let Sting get to the ropes, and he wasn't showing any signs of wearing down. He caught Sting with an elbow to the face, then floored him with a standing clothesline. Sting was dazed when The Giant booted him in the face, drawing blood from his nose, and was defenseless when The Giant lifted him by the throat.

The first choke-slam of the series came next, then the pin, at 10:43.

**The Giant defeats Sting, 4-3.**



Once The Giant has a man down, as Sting learned many, many months ago, he rarely lets him recover.

# BRET HART vs. CHRIS BENOIT

## ROUND

What looked like a mismatch on paper had its compelling attributes. Hart, the three-time former WWF World champion and native of Calgary, knows Benoit because Benoit trained under Bret's father, Stu, years ago. So this was a match of two Canadians, one who is regarded as one of the greatest wrestlers in the world, the other who seems to get better and better with each match.



Bret Hart is not known for his ability to win with his fists, but against a man like Chris Benoit, he would definitely have the edge in power.

Hart might be the finest scientific wrestler in the world—a few say the greatest of all-time—and his

intelligence and stamina are unequaled. His "sharpshooter" is effective more than 95 percent of the time, and Hart has paired it with an increasingly intense killer instinct. But if there's a shortcoming to his overall package, it's the shoulder and knee injuries that have piled up.

A smart wrestler—meaning Benoit—can concentrate on those areas of the body and possibly pull an upset.

Match one: a sizing-up period in which both men were locked up, shoulder-to-shoulder, arms-to-arms, for long periods of time. It was, however, a somewhat draining period for both men, as the struggle for an advantage soaked power out of their upper bodies. Hart prevailed.

Match two: Benoit tries to increase the tempo with suplexes and a flying headbutt. Hart's ability as a counterwrestler gets him through some tough periods, almost as if he's giving Benoit a test: How much *did* you learn from my father? And Benoit proves he has learned a lot, winning the match in the 14th minute.

Match three: Benoit's repertoire seemingly knows no limits, but Hart has a counter for every move he makes, and Benoit seems to get frustrated. Benoit, following a



Benoit is at his best when he keeps his opponent on the mat and wears him down. That's not easy to do when Bret Hart is your foe.

dropkick, goes for a pin when he probably should've spent more time weakening Hart. It's a mistake that eventually leads to a loss.

Match four: Benoit, turning to his limited power, pounds on Hart's legs, while "The Hitman," sitting up straight, uses his strength to punch Benoit's upper body. Benoit tries a figure-four, but Hart reverses it, nearly into a "sharpshooter." Now Benoit knows he can't make too many more mistakes, but he again goes for the figure-four that this time is turned into a "sharpshooter."

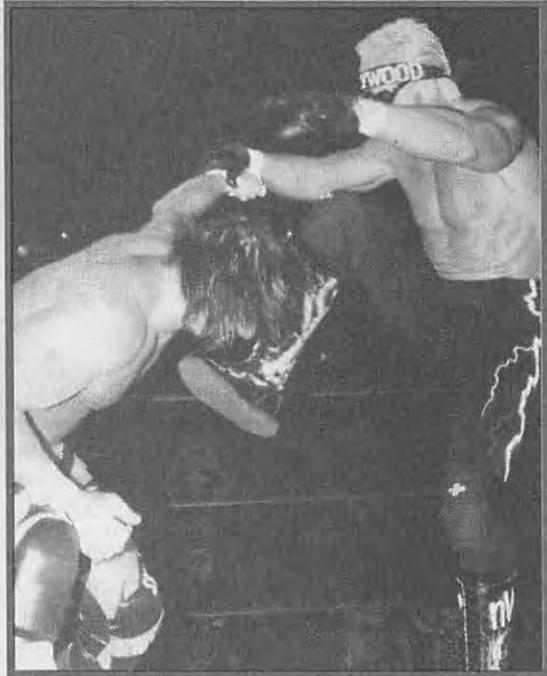
Match five: Only Benoit's intelligence is getting him by now, as he realizes this is the one man he can't beat on the mat. But each time he gets up and heads for the ropes, Hart catches him and either dumps him to the mat or sends him crashing across his knee. One more "sharpshooter" and the series is over.

**Hart defeats Benoit, 4-1.**

# KEVIN NASH vs. HULK HOGAN



## FIRST



Hogan tries to overpower *all* his foes with punches, kicks, and bodyslams, but against Nash, well, that's not easy.

Partners in crime in the New World Order, Nash and Hogan represent two generations of WWF history. Hogan dominated the belt for nearly a decade; Diesel took over after Hogan's departure and held the belt for nearly a year. Now here they are, two dominant figures, turning WCW upside-down with the NWO.

Will they ever meet in anything but the arena of our computer's microprocessor? Good chance considering we're dealing with two egomaniacs; at some point, Nash is bound to get fed up with Hogan stealing The Outsiders' thunder. After all, Nash and Scott Hall started all this.

Until then ... dream on.

The series started, as most Hogan matches do, with the challenger as the aggressor. Nash displayed no reluctance as he matched power with Hogan, perhaps realizing he's bigger and younger. The two men exchanged forearms for about four minutes. The match was fought neither in the air or on the mat; they stood toe-to-toe and tried to knock each other down. A clothesline by Nash had no effect on Hogan, but a series of chops by Hogan were barely effective. And that's the way it went for four grueling matches, each man matching strength for strength,

punch for punch, and neither willing to fall. Hogan won the first match, Nash took the second and third, and Hogan came back to win the fourth.

Hogan has never liked looking up to his opponents. He struggled at times against Andre the Giant in the 1980s and has had some trouble with The Giant. It's a puzzle he can't solve, and as the series hit match five, it became clear Hogan was in a battle for his own survival. Nash was relentless, running over Hogan like a freight train with forearms, clotheslines, bodyblocks, and a stunning slam that shook the arena. With nine minutes gone, Hogan tried summoning his ener-

gy for a comeback, but his punches bounced off Nash's chest, and his face turned a shade of crimson when Nash grabbed him by the throat and squeezed.

It seemed like the perfect opportunity for a choke-slam or a power bomb. Instead, Nash turned the tables on Hogan, flooring him with a big boot to the nose, slamming him to the mat, dropping the knee into the "Hulkster's" chest, then covering him for the pin. He had sent a message to Hogan, one that lasted into the sixth match. Somehow, Nash had Hogan psychologically beaten.

**Nash defeats Hogan, 4-2.**



Since he joined the New World Order, Nash has been intimidated by no one. If Hogan failed to psych him out, he'd stand a good chance of winning.

# STEVE AUSTIN vs. HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY

## ROUND

**H**unter Hearst Helmsley, much to everyone's surprise, is the WWF Intercontinental champion.

"Stone-Cold" Steve Austin, a former U.S. titleholder in WCW, wants the belt badly. Just before press time, they collided in a series of triangle matches with Bret Hart. Helmsley prevailed in those, but only because Hart and Austin were obsessed with making sure the other didn't win. But Helmsley has had the roughest time with Marc Mero, the former Johnny B Badd. Why should he have any luck with Austin, who is a superior wrestler to Mero?

Austin started out this series on the defensive, apparently unable to adapt to Helmsley's superior size. Looking up at Helmsley, he seemed to be looking for a way to bring him down to his level, but perhaps he shouldn't have bothered: Helmsley is not a particularly powerful individual.

Austin decided this would be a scientific series, and after three minutes of absorbing a little punishment, went on the attack, dizzying Helmsley with his scientific repertoire. Now the match was being fought at Austin's pace—a fast pace—and Helmsley didn't know which way to turn as Austin viciously attacked him from both sides, using the ropes to propel Helmsley like a slingshot.

Helmsley should have known he was in trouble when, as the underdog, he lost the first match. Things weren't looking better when Austin needed only eight minutes to dispose of HHH in the second match. Two "Stone-Cold" stunners" did the trick.

But once he got adjusted to Austin's speed, Helmsley showed off his counterwrestling skills and began to string together moves and countermoves in the must-win third match. Austin,

realizing he was in a battle, upped his intensity and went to a power attack, using his improved physique to score an edge over the bigger man. Helmsley hung tough, however, and won the match using his "pedigree."

The critical fourth match was a test of both men's stamina. Austin didn't stray from



Steve Austin has one of the more extensive scientific repertoires of anyone in the WWF, but no one should underestimate his ability to throw a punch.

his game plan and didn't look for unorthodox ways to defeat Helmsley. He simply assumed that ability would win out, as it did. Helmsley's premature attempt at a "pedigree" cost him in the fourth match. Now down, and just about out, Helmsley threw everything he could at Austin. But hardly winded and still strong, Austin grabbed Helmsley's legs, brought him to the mat, executed another "Stone-Cold" stunner, then caught him in his "Million-Dollar Dream" sleeperhold. Within seconds, Helmsley was out.

**Austin defeats Helmsley, 4-1.**



Hunter Hearst Helmsley likes using the rear chinlock to wear down his foes. He'd want to slow down the pace of any match he had with Steve Austin.

# DALLAS PAGE vs. SHAWN MICHAELS

## FIRST

**H**e might be the hottest and most improved wrestler in the world—a down-on-his-luck, penniless, failed office clerk who got serious and turned around his career—but that didn't make "Diamond" Dallas Page the favorite in his series with former WWF World champ Shawn Michaels. Barring a computer glitch—a common occurrence with today's high-speed machines—this one figured to go Michaels' way.

And it did, in rather entertaining fashion. Page, with his newfound determination, didn't go without a fight and threw a couple of new twists at Michaels, who tends to become cocky when he doesn't

respect his opponent.

In match one, Page came out on the attack, hoping to use his considerable size advantage to throw Michaels off balance. A five-inch height difference can mean a lot in wrestling, and although Michaels is well-sculptured at 6', 234 pounds, he has never had much luck going punch-for-punch with any wrestler (although he has fared well against big men such as Kevin Nash). This was Page's plan: to get into a slugfest with Michaels and make certain science and aerial wrestling did not play a major part in the outcome of the match.

It worked for a while. During the first seven minutes, Michaels couldn't establish a rhythm. Every time he whipped Page into the ropes, DDP would smartly hold on, leaving Michaels waiting for a guest that wasn't coming. Page didn't seem interested in setting up Michaels for his "Diamond cutter," and without anyone at ringside to distract him, Page wrestled as impressively as he has in his career. Then Page started working on Michaels' injured back, and it looked like we might see an upset.

And we did—in match one. Page used an inside cradle to pin a stunned Michaels.



Page hasn't won many matches in the last year without using his "Diamond cutter." Would he stand a chance against Michaels without it?

But match two was different. Another back attack seemingly stirred Michaels, who quickly decided he didn't want to take any more punishment. The first seven minutes of the match proved to be a wakeup call for Michaels, who didn't need any rousing the rest of the way. Page finished match two bloodied and beaten. Michaels was in control from the outset of match three and won with a superkick. Match four was the longest, going over 15 minutes, but Page was never in position to win. And that was the case in match five, when Michaels' aerial assault, combined with a healthy dose of power, had DDP off balance from the outset.

**Michaels defeats Page, 4-1.**



Keep the match moving at a fast pace and use those aerial skills—that's usually Michaels' strategy. It's likely how he'd try to beat DDP.

# TAZ vs. KENTA KOBASHI

## ROUND

The possibilities were endless, the maneuvers plentiful, and the tease complete. How we wish we could see Taz, the master of the suplex and probably the finest technical wrestler in ECW, battle All-Japan Triple Crown champion Kent Kobashi in real life!

It certainly would a battle of an American light heavyweight vs. a Japanese heavyweight. Taz is 5'9" and weighs 221 pounds. Kobashi is 6'2", 261. Taz has often said that he would love to take on the best of the Orient.

The bell rang. Match one had an incredible pace from start to finish, with both men showing off their stamina and array of moves. Taz went first, proving he wasn't intimidated by the larger Kobashi by landing a series of forearm smashes to the shoulders and executing a beautiful amateur-style leg takedown. Kobashi, obvi-

ously impressed, responded by drawing Taz into a test of strength and forcing him to the mat on one knee. Then he slapped Taz across the face, picked him up, and sent him flying across the ring and into the ropes.

It kept going this way, with Kobashi wrestling and Taz counterwrestling, then Taz wrestling and Kobashi counterwrestling. Every impressive move in their varied repertoires was on display in a series that was a marathon in every sense of the word.

Match one lasted 35 minutes and was won by Taz via his Tazmission. Kobashi overcame several thunderous suplexes to win the second match in 27:32. Taz won the third match in an incredible 40:23,

overcoming an early power attack by Kobashi and recovering after landing face-first on the arena floor. The combatants, gaining a healthy respect for each other, split the fourth and fifth matches, and Taz went into match six with a 3-2 lead.

It was a classic battle, with the advantage changing hands several times and the action twice spilling outside the ring. Kobashi twice hurt Taz by slamming him on the ring apron. But



The legdrop is one of the moves Kobashi has used many times. But against Taz, attempting such a move too early in a match could be very

Taz, showing his usual perseverance, bounced back, brought the action back inside the ring, and continued with his game plan.

As the match reached the 20-minute mark, it looked like Taz would never get his chance and that in this case, Kobashi's size and power would be the difference. But the turning point came when Kobashi slammed Taz to the mat and then climbed to the second rope. This was, at it turned out, far too early for Kobashi to make his move, and Taz grabbed him off the top rope and used a belly-to-back suplex on him. Then Taz caught Kobashi in a painful leglock for nearly a minute, weakening Kobashi and setting him up for the Tazmission. He got it at 23:08.

Taz defeats Kobashi, 4-2.



If you're going to wrestle Taz, you have to be prepared for all his suplexes. He can use them as finishers or to set up his Tazmission.

# FLASH FUNK vs. RAVEN



## FIRST



Flash Funk isn't known as a classic mat wrestler. If he can't use his aerial skills, he's in a lot of trouble.

Somehow, one half of our draw got packed with superstars, while the bottom half was dominated by lesser-known stars with incredible skills. In this case, we have Flash Funk—the former 2 Cold Scorpio—vs. Raven, the ECW heavyweight champion.

The question here was whether Raven could ground Funk's aerial attack and bring the series down to the mat. Funk, on the other hand, planned on crossing up Raven with an array of aerial moves, including legdrops and dropkicks, before putting him away with a moonsault. Although he relies on a lot of finesse, Funk won't shy away from a free-for-all, which is what he got from the opening bell.

Raven went hard after Funk,

attacking him from the waist up while staying close enough so that Funk couldn't launch an aerial attack. This strategy worked in the first match, which Raven won in 11:32. But in match two, strength battled strength as they traded punches in an atypical match. Raven, who has more mental toughness than just about any man in ECW, was obviously trying to see how long Funk could last with him in an all-out battle. It was no surprise that with only three minutes gone in the match, both men were sweating profusely, having gone at it like two Greco-Roman wrestlers in an Olympic gold medal match. Body against body, hand against hand, Funk was out of his element, but still battling gallantly. He finally got his chance with eight minutes gone when he pushed off and sent Raven careening into the ropes. Raven bounced off, and Funk caught him with a sensational dropkick that caught him square in the chest. The pin followed, evening the series.

After splitting

the next two matches, Raven seemed to find his footing in match five. With nine minutes gone, Funk scored with a low dropkick and followed it with a leg-drop. But as Funk walked toward the corner, Raven grabbed his ankle, tugged him to the mat, and unleashed an assault of his own. He got the pin seconds later.

In match six, Raven pummeled Funk's legs, then tried a variation of the "sharpshooter" that Funk pushed out of. With both men on the mat, Funk was at a clear disadvantage and unable to offer a significant rebuttal to Raven's two-fisted attack. Funk tried to get up, but Raven had a firm grip on his wrist. He twisted Funk's arm backward into a pretzel-like position that had Funk begging for mercy. But there was no mercy. Raven pulled hard, then locked Funk in a Boston crab. Funk had no choice but to submit.

**Raven defeats Funk, 4-2.**



Raven enjoys using chairs and other foreign objects on his opponents, but the guy can throw a dropkick as well as almost anyone in ECW if he wants to.

# REY MISTERIO JR. vs. SCOTT HALL

## ROUND

Another classic battle, another physical mismatch, another series that, in our eyes, could have gone either way. Hall is 6'8", 290. Misterio is only 5'3", 140.



Sure, Mysterio's "Frankensteiner" has been very effective against cruiserweights like Dean Malenko, but could it really work against Scott Hall?

Here was a challenge unlike any Mysterio had ever faced. Since coming to WCW, he has concentrated on fellow cruiserweights. This was like an NFL linebacker battling a teenager. The ultimate test of the wrestling's age-old question: Is it better to be big and powerful or small and skilled?

In match one, it was Hall who seemed thrown for a loop by the mismatch in size. He wasn't sure

how to handle his much smaller opponent, so he stalked him for the first minute. That was fine with Mysterio, who knew he could win a long match. Hall seemed to be looking for a game plan. He took the first idea that came along. Hall tried to grab Mysterio, who ducked out of the way. Again he tried to grab Mysterio, and again the smaller man averted the giant's grasp. Within minutes, he was easy prey for Mysterio, who won the match by leaping off the top rope and executing a "Frankensteiner."

But Mysterio was feeling too good in match two and got too close to Hall. This time, Hall caught him and rocked him with a power bomb for the pin at 7:45.

Match three: Mysterio picked his spots, avoiding Hall and attacking from behind, weakening his opponent with a series of dropkicks to the spine. Dizzied, Hall's only counter was to get mad, but that hardly helped him get even. Mysterio won to take the series lead. Hall felt a twinge in his leg. It was a hairline fracture.

Although Hall had a huge advantage in size and power, he now had no way to use it. How could he destroy what he couldn't catch? And as Mysterio stepped up the pace of match four by bouncing around the ring, catching Hall with quick kick jabs, and making Hall chase him, it became clear that Hall, who was limping badly, was on the verge of suffering an embarrassing loss.

He lost match four in the 13th minute and trailed, three matches to one. Mysterio was increasing the

tempo with each passing second, and Hall was falling into the trap when he should have stood in the middle of the ring and waited. Somehow, Hall got lucky in match five when one of his big forearms landed, and he followed it up with a clothesline. But in match six, Mysterio mounted the second rope for a moonsault. Hall stood where he was. As Mysterio went to the air,



There's nothing complicated about Hall's attack. He just likes to beat people up. That's easier said than done against someone like Mysterio.

Hall reached out as if he wanted to catch him. The bottom of Mysterio's boots caught Hall in the face.

Now frustrated and hurting badly, Hall had nothing to offer.

**Mysterio defeats Hall, 4-2.**

# THE GIANT vs. BRET HART



We live in an era of dream matches come true. Little has been left to the imagination these days, because so many wrestlers have competed in both the WWF and WCW that just about every interesting matchup has been fought. But there are still a few left: Shawn Michaels vs. Sting, maybe, or this one.

Gets the blood rushing, doesn't it? In one corner, a three-time former WWF World champion, one of the finest mat wrestlers of all-time: Bret Hart. And in the other corner, a second-year wrestler, already a former WCW World champion, and one of the largest men to ever grace the squared circle: The Giant.

Imagine the tension as match one approaches. It's at a jam-



Anyone who thinks The Giant is a master of only the choke-slam doesn't know the man. He can put an opponent away with a vertical suplex, too.

packed Madison Square Garden, a place where The Giant has never wrestled. And perhaps his nervousness would get the best of him, and Hart's experience and skill would win out, but there'd be another time.

Match two, when The Giant finally realizes he's wrestling a man whose shoulders and back are not in perfect condition. The Giant looks down at Hart and realizes that's how his attack should proceed—down, with punches and elbows raining on Hart's shoulders and back, and an occasional poke to the face thrown in. A thunderous suplex followed by a choke-



Bret Hart likes to come off the ropes and drive his elbow into a prone opponent's back, but getting a man like The Giant down is no easy task.

slam: Can Hart get up? No.

So it's on to the third match, and this time more than 70,000 fans are packing the Georgia Dome, wondering who's going to have the edge. Hart keeps a safe distance from The Giant for the first 10 minutes, making the big man chase him, and the strategy works. He wins with the "sharpshooter." But in match four, Giant grabs hold of Hart early and never lets go. This time, there's not only one choke-slam, but two, then a third.

The series is even, but any observer knows that's not the case. Hart is living on borrowed time, but his perseverance is so impressive, his will to fight on unmatched, and The Giant has never seen such drive in an opponent. He figured an injured Hart would be easy prey, but he isn't, because "The Hitman" knows how to win when hurt. He does, winning the next match to take a 3-2 lead.

Now it comes down to size, and heart, and power, and skill, and 15 minutes of wrestling like nobody has ever seen. The Giant is on the attack, Hart is counter-wrestling, but his attempted "sharpshooter" is lame. The Giant grabs him by the neck, but instead of going for the choke-slam, he pushes off, then lands a stunning dropkick that sends him through the ropes and onto the arena floor.

Hart is unconscious and gets pinned after The Giant pulls him into the ring.

**The Giant defeats Hart, 4-2.**

# KEVIN NASH vs. STEVE AUSTIN

## RFINALS

You know him now as one of the men behind the NWO, one of the first two "Outsiders," but make no mistake about Kevin Nash. Diesel is Diesel, size and all, and that year he spent as WWF World champ was no fluke. Steve Austin can only imagine what it must be like to achieve those heights; it's something he has been shooting for his entire career.

Here's another matchup that might have happened in real life had Nash and Austin not criss-crossed in their careers: Austin arrived in the WWF just a few months before Nash left for WCW. It's another battle of size vs. skill, with equally healthy amounts of determination, drive, and courage thrown in. Austin has decided it's worth paying the price for fame.

Nash has paid the price before and will pay it again.

The series nearly went the distance. Amazingly, not one match ended via Austin's "Stone-Cold stunner" or "Million-Dollar Dream," or Nash's "jackknife." The wrestlers were so wary of each other that they had to take alternative routes to victory.

Match one was all Nash, with the 356-pounder showing he could wrestle all-out with Austin for long periods. This discouraged Austin, who figured stamina was his main advantage, but he should have known: Nash has also fared well in the past against Shawn Michaels and Bret Hart, two of wrestling's marathon men. Austin, at a loss for how to attack Nash, lost the second match, too, when he tried to match Nash's power and attempted a body-slam. Nash fell backward onto Austin for the pin and a 2-0 series lead.

But Austin is nothing if not determined, and his goal in match three was to wear down Nash with series of short, quick moves, leg takedowns, armbars, and a dropkick here and there. When it was time to get tough, Austin got dirty and dug his fingers into Nash's eyes. The strategy worked, and Austin got his first win, cutting Nash's lead to 2-1.

Austin was in dire trouble when Nash asserted his size advantage to win



Austin must outwrestle his opponent to beat him. He can do that using suplexes and many other moves. But he must stick to his game plan to be effective.

match four, but again Austin didn't give up without a fight, winning the fifth match and sending the sixth match into the 20th minute, where he figured to be the stronger wrestler.

But Nash, resolute, summoned some extra energy and worked on Austin's shoulders with pinches, forearms, and elbows. He drove Austin to the mat with a thunderous right hand, then felled him with a left as Austin tried working his way to his feet. Then came a big boot, right between the eyes, that stunned Austin long enough—three seconds—for Nash to get the pin.

**Nash defeats Austin, 4-2.**



Trying to match Nash bodyslam for bodyslam and power move for power move would not be a good idea for someone of Austin's size. Nash is just too big and strong.

# SHAWN MICHAELS vs. TAZ



## QUARTE



Even though he isn't particularly powerful, Shawn Michaels likes trading punches with his opponents. He's most effective, though, in fast-paced bouts.

Calling a wrestler "scientific" hardly begins to describe how he goes about his business. There are various types of scientific wrestlers. Some rely on aerial moves and like to wrestle at a fast pace. Some are careful, methodical, and like to keep the action down on the mat as much as possible. Shawn Michaels likes it fast. Taz likes it slow. The pace of the match would decide the outcome of their quarterfinal round series.

How many different variations of the suplex would Taz have on display?

How many aerial moves and flying kicks would Michaels bring to the dance?

Michaels once said he detested one-sided matches and loves a

challenge; Taz loves to be tested, too.

The outcome of this series was by no means indicative of how the individual matches were fought. They were close, with each man having numerous chances to score pinfalls. Yet one man kept prevailing.

Getting Michaels down to the mat is not an easy task, because he doesn't want to be there and is too smart to fall for tricks. So Taz had to sacrifice his body to get Michaels into the proper position. That's what he did. Taz kept setting himself up for dropkicks, hoping Michaels would hit the ground on one. When it finally happened, with eight minutes gone in the first match, Taz had three consecutive two-counts.

Michaels had eight two-counts in the first match; Taz had six. Over the course of the series, Michaels would have 38 two-counts, while Taz would have 24. Obviously, this series could have gone either way. Michaels had no counter for Taz' belly-to-back suplex in match one, but he recovered and felled Taz with a superkick for the pin.

Michaels tried to set up Taz for another superkick in match two, but Taz recognized the strategy. Yet, with 16 minutes

gone, he allowed Michaels to dictate the pace, and four minutes later, he was flat on his back as the referee counted to three.

Michaels refused to exercise patience in match three and went right at Taz with a sensational aerial attack that had the ECW star trying in vain to slow the bout. Michaels won to go up, 3-0, but Taz, stringing together seven suplexes 13 minutes into match four, averted a sweep.

Finally, in match five, Michaels decided to go after Taz with kicks and punches. Taz was stunned, but managed to regain his wits and slow the match. Then Michaels made an offer: He got down on one knee and offered to wrestle an amateur-style match with Taz, who gladly accepted. But it was a ruse. Michaels grabbed Taz by the neck and snapped him to the mat. The pin followed.

**Michaels defeats Taz, 4-1.**



If he's going to win a match, Taz must execute at least a suplex or two. Against Michaels, though, one belly-to-back might not be enough.

# RAVEN vs. REY MISTERIO JR.

## RFINALS

**H**aving overcome the much larger Scott Hall in the first round—and breaking his leg in the process—we figured Misterio would have no trouble with Raven, who has only a 95-pound weight advantage over him. Raven, though one of the toughest wrestlers in ECW, doesn't have the scientific tools or quickness to match Misterio. But he put up a gallant effort.

One of the interesting things about Misterio, and one reason he fares so well against larger opponents, is that size doesn't mean much to him. After all, he spends most of his time on the second or

third rope, and therefore is looking down upon even the largest opponents. Size is only a factor on solid ground, and that's not where Misterio takes his matches.

The keys for Raven were keeping the match on the mat or outside the ring and making sure Misterio stayed within reach. But Misterio had no interest in doing that and, just seconds after the opening bell, actually climbed to the top rope and dared Raven to come after him. Raven didn't go for the bait.

That posed an interesting problem for Misterio, similar to the one often faced by Major League Baseball managers: What happens when the other team won't pitch to your best hitter? Do you let the slugger swing at bad pitches, or do you take the walks and hope the rest of the lineup can come through?

For Misterio: Do I stay with my game plan, or do I play into Raven's hands?

In matches one and two, Misterio played into Raven's hands. If one drew a circle with a eight-foot diameter, that's basically the area in which the first two matches took place. Misterio never got beyond arm's reach of Raven and paid for his mistake, losing both matches, in 11 and 13 minutes, respectively.



Raven isn't known for his figure-four leglock, but it wouldn't be a bad idea for him to use it on Misterio. Anything to keep Rey Jr. out of the air.

Could an upset be in the making? Was one of the greatest aerial wrestlers of all-time on the verge of defeat?

Well, it takes four matches to win a series, and Raven wouldn't win another one. Misterio got smart. He made Raven come to him and, by doing so, turned the series into an aerial show. Misterio attacked with headscissors, "Frankensteiners," and moonsaults. When Raven left the ring for a breather, Misterio came at him with sensational dives between the ropes.

Misterio won the third match by catching Raven in a "Frankensteiner" and flipping him to the mat. He won the third match following a stunning moonsault, and the third off a series of drop-kicks: five in 13 seconds! Misterio had solved Raven. The series, as it turned out, came down to who went to who. The aggressor was the loser. Raven was the aggressor here.

**Misterio defeats Raven, 4-2.**



Once Misterio is able to quicken the pace of a match and start using all of his aerial moves, he's tough to slow down ... and even tougher to beat.

# THE GIANT vs. KEVIN NASH



SEMIF



The Giant is used to manhandling much smaller opponents. He hasn't had much experience against men who can *almost* look him in the eye.

In a way, we've already seen this match. When The Giant left the New World Order, he was attacked by several NWO members, including Nash. But never have they met one-on-one in the ring, and the prospect of this clash of titans got our blood rushing.

The Giant: 7'4", 430 pounds, and mean.

Nash: 7', 356 pounds, and nasty when he has to be.

Both are former world champions and, in all likelihood, there's another world title in both their futures. For one, there would be a trip to the finals and a chance at a first computer tournament championship. It's a groundbreaking, earth-shattering matchup.

The sight of these twin towers in the ring was an impressive one, indeed, as they squared off for match one. The Giant locked his hands onto Nash's massive shoulders and, for the first time in his career, Nash was looking up at his opponent. It was a weird feeling for Nash, but it didn't alter his game plan: He knew he'd have to outslug The Giant.

Match one was the anticipated slugfest, with both men going at each other all-out after a sizing-up period. At one point, both men landed simultaneous clotheslines, and the ring shook with the impact of 786 pounds striking the canvas. Nash scored with a rare dropkick that stunned The Giant and threw him off for the rest of the night. Although Nash wisely wouldn't attempt another dropkick for the entire series, the prospect of one concerned The Giant.

Nash won the first match and seemed on his way to winning the second when consecutive clotheslines rocked The Giant and sent him falling backward into the ropes. But The Giant didn't go down, and now Nash was the one questioning himself, and The Giant maintained control the rest of the way, finally winning following a series of right and left forearms, then a thunderous powerslam.

Nash threw him a little science in match three, hobbled The Giant with a

suplex, and put him to bed with two standing clotheslines. The Giant won the fourth match to even the series, rebounding from five two-counts in the 12th minute to rally for victory in the 14th.

With the series tied, Nash turned up his killer instinct for match five. He attacked from the opening bell, weakening The Giant with forearms and kicks and never relinquishing the advantage. He won in the eighth minute with a sensational power bomb. And in match six, all of Giant's desperate offensive thrusts were denied by Nash, who seemed to be impenetrable. When The Giant tried lifting Nash in the eighth minute, Nash shifted his weight and fell on top of The Giant. The series was over; Nash was in the finals.

Nash defeats The Giant, 4-2.



Nash's forearm smashes are usually powerful enough to knock his opponents off their feet. Against the 7'4" Giant, he'd need more.

# SHAWN MICHAELS vs. REY MISTERIO JR.

## INALS

After overcoming two big men in the first two rounds, Misterio found himself up against a man more his size. Michaels, though no big man, still has nine inches and 94 pounds on Misterio. But Michaels, unlike Scott Hall and Raven, wasn't likely to depend upon his size; he is a scientific and aerial expert.

The question was whether Michaels would be tempted to try to overpower Misterio, or whether he'd learn from the mistakes made by Hall and Raven and try to outwrestle Misterio. As the series continued, it was clear we'd see a little of both.



If Misterio can't use of his "Frankenstein," headscissors, moonsault, and other aerial moves, he simply can't win. Problem is, Michaels is a good aerialist, too.

It was a confident Michaels who stepped into the ring for the first match. He seemed to relish the idea of matching athletic ability with Misterio, who didn't appear daunted by the prospect of a series of marathon matches.

Four of the matches were true marathons, stretching beyond the 30th minute, with nonstop dropkicks, moonsaults, and suplexes. Michaels looked like he was ready to stand up and cheer after Misterio landed a somersault splash from the top rope and was amazed by the height Misterio reached on a dropkick. Here was a battle of two men who care about how the sport looks.

It looked beautiful for Michaels in match one, which he finally won via a bodyslam-superkick-moonsault combination at 33:42. But Michaels' ego got the best of him in match two. He foolishly tried to overpower Misterio, who relishes nothing more than an opponent straying from a game plan. Misterio couldn't be overpowered, because Michaels couldn't hit a flying object. As his frustration built, Michaels found himself on the receiving end of a spinning dropkick that led to his downfall at 14:22.

Michaels refused to make the same mistake twice and stuck with his strengths the rest of the way. The problem for Misterio was that although he had a wider array of moves than Michaels, his dropkicks and "Frankensteiners" were delivered with less force. Misterio's aerial moves grazed Michaels, while Michaels inflicted



Would Shawn Michaels try to beat Rey Misterio Jr. with suplexes ... and perhaps try to overpower him? That might not be the best way to go.

cumulative damage. Michaels won the third match when he scored with a flying bodypress from the second rope, then piledriven Misterio at 39:01.

The fourth match featured three two-counts for Misterio, but Michaels fought back to win via a superkick-elbowdrop combination at 37:54. Misterio dug deeper into his repertoire in match five, but he had nothing left; he had shown everything, and Michaels had the proper counter. Desperate, Misterio attempted a somersault splash from the top rope, even though Michaels was three-quarters of the way across the ring. He landed face-first on the mat, a foot short of Michaels.

"The Heartbreak Kid" got the pin at 33:35 to advance to the finals.

**Michaels defeats Misterio, 4-1.**

# KEVIN NASH vs. SHAWN MICHAELS

## FINAL

**S**o they meet again. Imagination was fed by reality in this championship encounter that gave our computer plenty of food for thought: past meetings.

Nash and Michaels were once best friends in the WWF, when Nash was known as Diesel. Then, after

pin Michaels at 20:40. Twenty-four hours later, they were friends again. Shortly before Nash left for WCW, though, Michaels humbled him in a grueling series of bouts. Nash vs. Michaels is such an

None more interesting than what happened in match one. With nine minutes gone, Nash tried a drop-kick and Michaels switched to a kicking-and-punching attack. It was as if they had changed personalities. Nash was relying on finesse, of which he has little. Michaels was relying on power, of which he doesn't have enough to beat a big man. It was as if a fastball pitcher had started throwing changeups and a home run hitter had countered by trying to lay down a bunt. This lasted for about five minutes, with neither man getting much accomplished.

With 14 minutes gone, Nash began pounding on Michaels, who desperately tried to keep his distance. Nash scored with a thunderous bodyslam, then dug a knee into Michaels' mid-section ... and stayed in that position for more than a minute. Michaels was gasping for air, but Nash showed no mercy until he lifted his knee ... then planted it in Michaels' groin.

Now Michaels was unable to move. When Nash stood up, Michaels writhed in pain on the mat. Nash arrogantly stalked him, then came down with an elbow-drop that would have finished the match ... had Michaels not moved out of the way. But he did and with Nash in pain, Michaels stumbled over, dropped a knee onto Nash's throat, and scored

(Continued on page 47)



At WrestleMania XI, Michaels was surprisingly successful with his fists against Nash (left). In the end, though, Shawn couldn't match the strength of his nemesis (above).

enticing matchup because their friendship has been filled with intrigue.

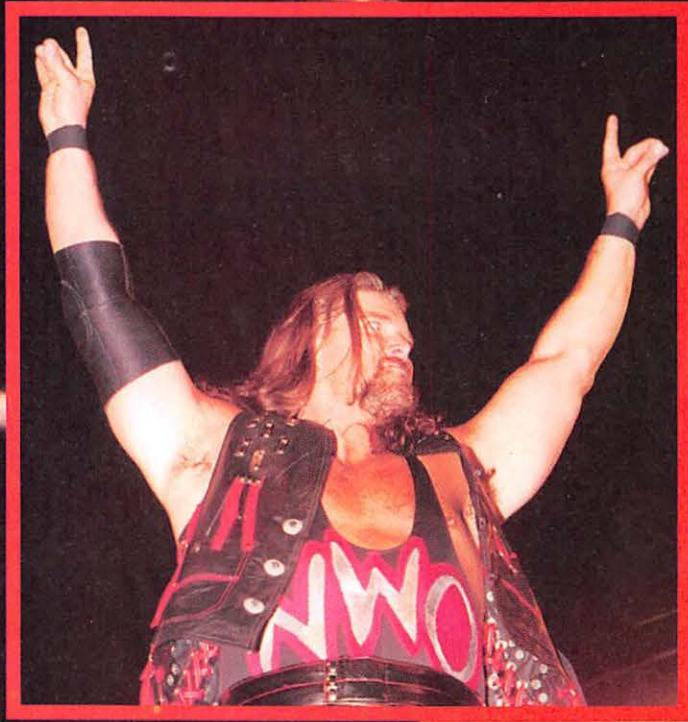
Michaels has often said that he knows Nash better than any man alive, and Nash would undoubtedly say the same about Michaels. Familiarity has made for some interesting moments between them.

Nash won the WWF World title, he and Michaels finally met in the ring. At WrestleMania XI, Nash used his "jackknife" power bomb to

THE  
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AND  
ONLY  
STEVE  
AUSTIN



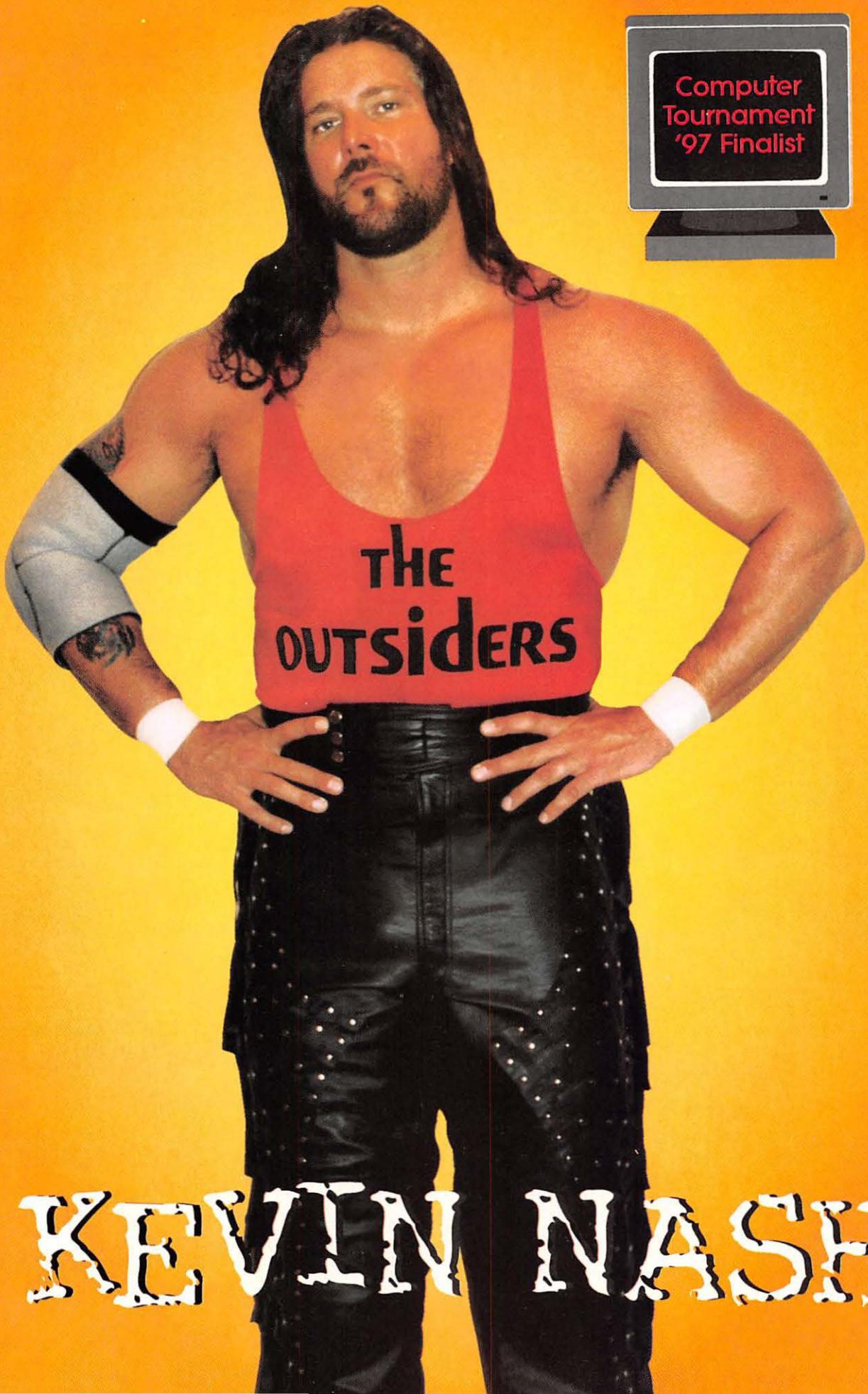
Computer  
Tournament  
'97 Finalist





Computer  
Tournament  
'97 Final  
**ACTION CLOSEUP**

**Shawn Michaels has wrestled Kevin Nash enough times to know that to have a chance to beat the seven-footer, he must methodically wear him down and take away that 12-inch height advantage. Speed, agility, determination, and guts—those are some of "The Heartbreak Kid's" strengths. Could he overcome Nash's raw power in a best-of-seven series? Tough call—but our computer gives Nash the right to raise his arms in triumph in the end.**



Computer  
Tournament  
'97 Finalist

KEVIN NASH

the pin at 17:04.

This incredible turnaround was a sign of things to come. In each of the next five matches, the man who was dominating would lose in stunning fashion. First it was Nash. On the verge of evening the series in match two, he had Michaels bloodied and beaten, but Michaels found some energy in reserve and fought back for the win and a commanding 2-0 series lead.

But overconfidence got the best of Michaels in match three. He dominated the first 10 minutes, stunning Nash with his aerial attack, but a dropkick attempted from too far away turned the match in Nash's favor. Nash won at 18:37 following a intense power

bomb, then won match four, too, after reversing the fourth of consecutive two-counts by Michaels.

The series was even, and it would come down to a best-of-three. And the pattern continued, with Nash dominating match five. Michaels could barely walk, but he ducked away from a clothesline, sending Nash flying over the top rope and to the arena floor. This was Michaels' chance, and he took it, suplexing Nash back into the ring and winning via pinfall at 13:22 for a 3-2 lead.

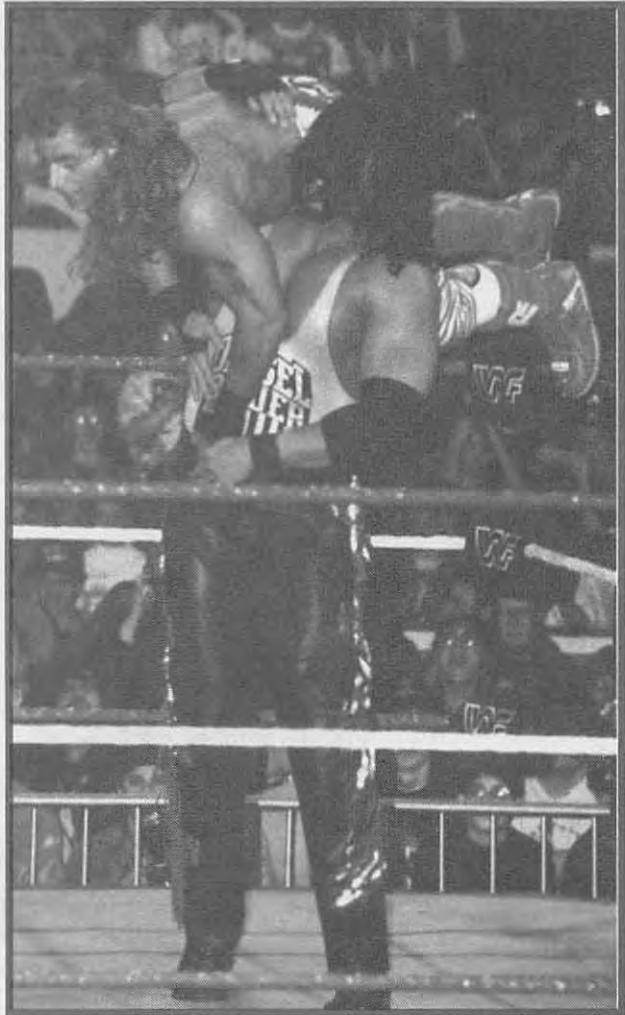
In match six, Michaels appeared to be on his way to victory. Nash just refused to go down. He finally caught Michaels by the ankle, spun him around like a rag-

doll, and sent him careening into the cornerpost. The pinfall followed at 11:59, setting up the deciding seventh match.

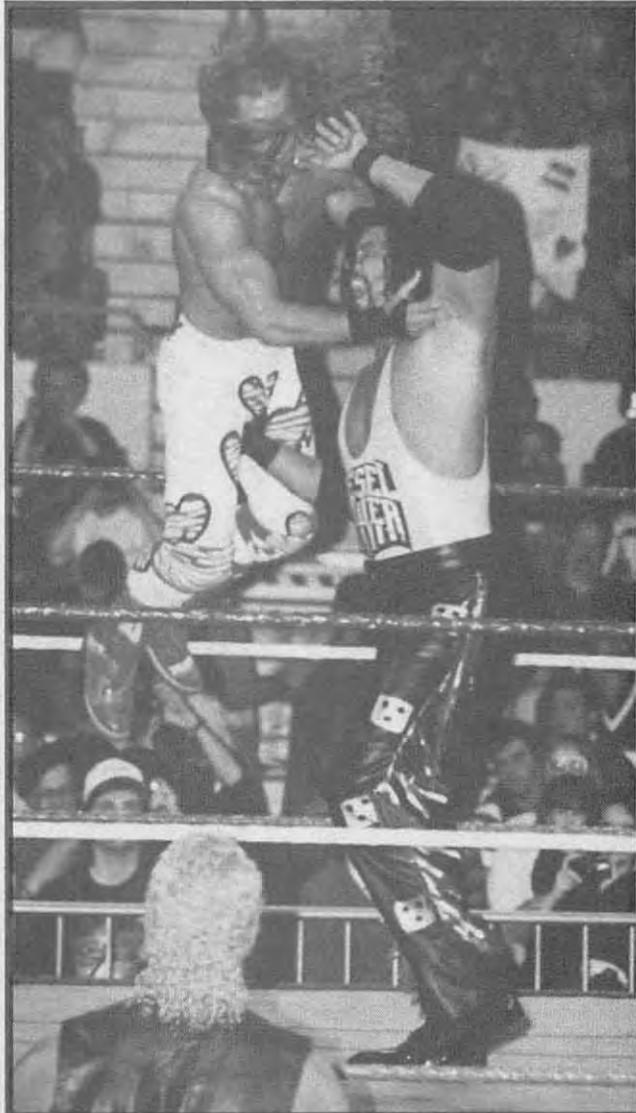
Neither man dominated this one. The advantage went back and forth; the action was reminiscent of their WrestleMania battle. Michaels used a sleeper to wear down Nash for almost 10 minutes. But they eventually engaged in a slugfest. It was a battle Michaels couldn't win. With 22:30 gone, Nash grabbed Michaels, looked him in the eye, and said, "You're finished."

Two suplexes and two power bombs later, Nash was the new computer champion.

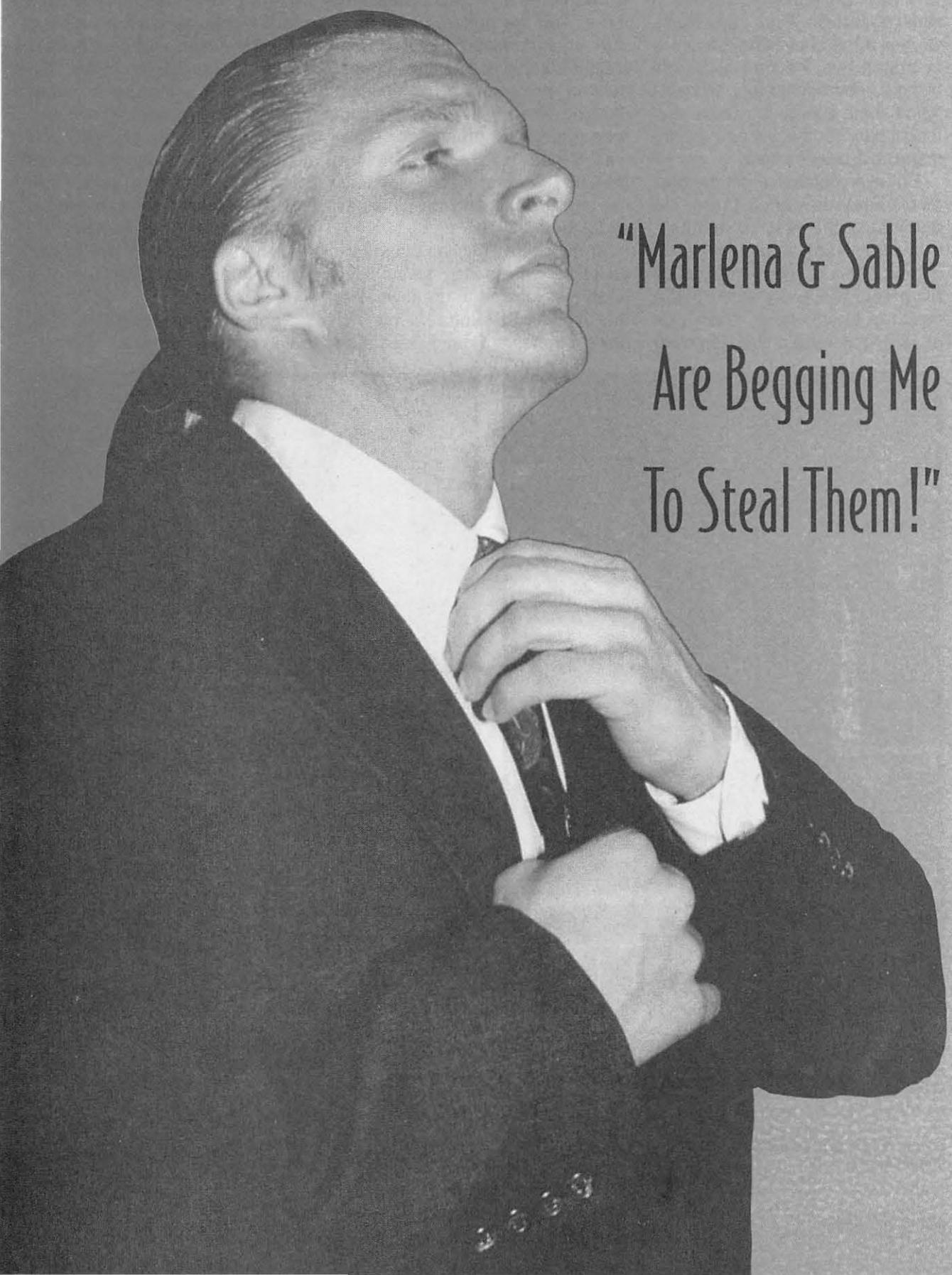
**Nash defeats Michaels, 4-3, to win the tournament.** □



As Michaels knows, Nash does not go down easy (above) ... even when he seems beaten. The big man loves to use the power bomb, but sometimes a good bodyslam can set up that finisher (right).



# IS HELMSLEY FOR REAL?



"Marlena & Sable  
Are Begging Me  
To Steal Them!"



Is it just the case an  
egomaniacal womanizer  
making up a wild story,  
or could Hunter Hearst  
Helmsley's claims be true?  
No, they couldn't be ...  
could they?

By Bryan Ethier

**P**OOR SABLE. THE blonde bombshell should have known what she was getting into when she made her WWF debut alongside Hunter Hearst Helmsley at WrestleMania XII. Helmsley was never one to treat women with respect. He sees them as mere playthings. But at WrestleMania XII, "Wildman" Marc Mero rode into the WWF on his white stallion and rescued her from the evil blueblood.

Since that memorable night, Mero and Helmsley have tussled jealously over her like two high school football stars scrumming over the prom queen. Helmsley desperately wants Sable back, but Sable claims she cares only for Mero.

And poor Marlena. The myste-

rious, cigar-smoking "director" of Goldust now finds herself caught in Helmsley's web as well. With a piqued Goldust doffing his wig and his gold robe, Marlena is fighting bitterly to extricate herself from HHH's reach.

Don't they get it? Sable and Marlena will only enjoy safety and sanity when they get away from the squared circle, away from the loco trio of Mero, Helmsley, and Goldust.

Only then will there be a moment's domestic peace within the WWF.

But are they truly seeking peace and quiet? That is the question of the day. Or are they using their guile and moxie to create one of the most captivating and bizarre stories of 1997? Is Helmsley nothing more than a philanderer, trying to entice the leggy duo into his harem, or are



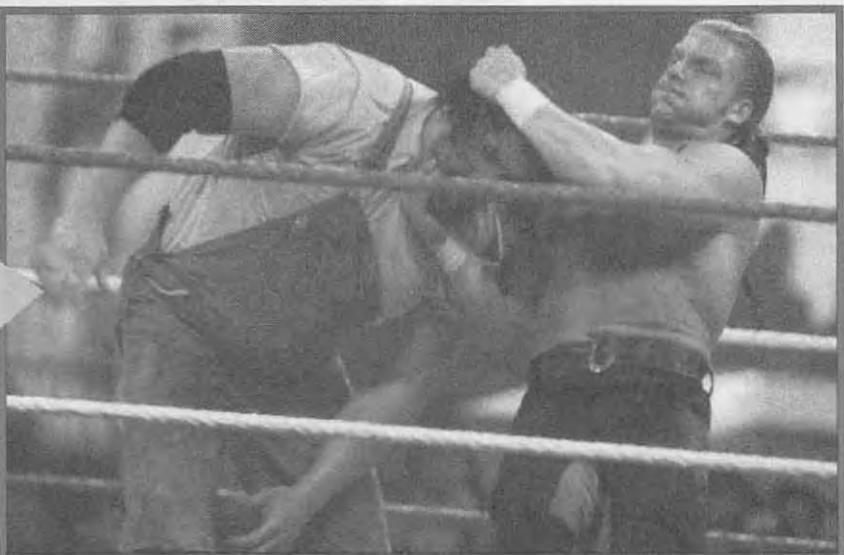
Less than 24 hours before Sable made her WWF debut on the arm of Hunter Hearst Helmsley at WrestleMania XII, HHH appeared at the Slammys with a different lady at his side. Just an egotistical womanizer, right? Maybe not.

Helmsley likes having a woman in his corner to watch him dismantle his opponents. It does, though, seem odd that he would make passes at Marlena and Sable and risk incurring the wrath of their men.

Helmsley and Sable have had several run-ins since she ditched him for Mero last spring. It seems hard to believe she'd be dying to go back to him.

Marlena and Sable simply fickle schoolgirls seeking to satisfy their immense egos?

Today's WWF soap opera began at In Your House XII, when Marlena accused Helmsley of making a pass at her. Goldust was infuriated by Helmsley's indiscretion. Why Helmsley would allow himself such an error in judgment is not known ... at least not by anyone with a gram of sense and sobriety. At any rate, during the rollicking IYH match between Mero and Helmsley, an enraged Goldust interfered, striking both Mero and Helmsley with the Intercontinental belt. Ultimately, 'Dust's treachery cost Helmsley



the match via countout.

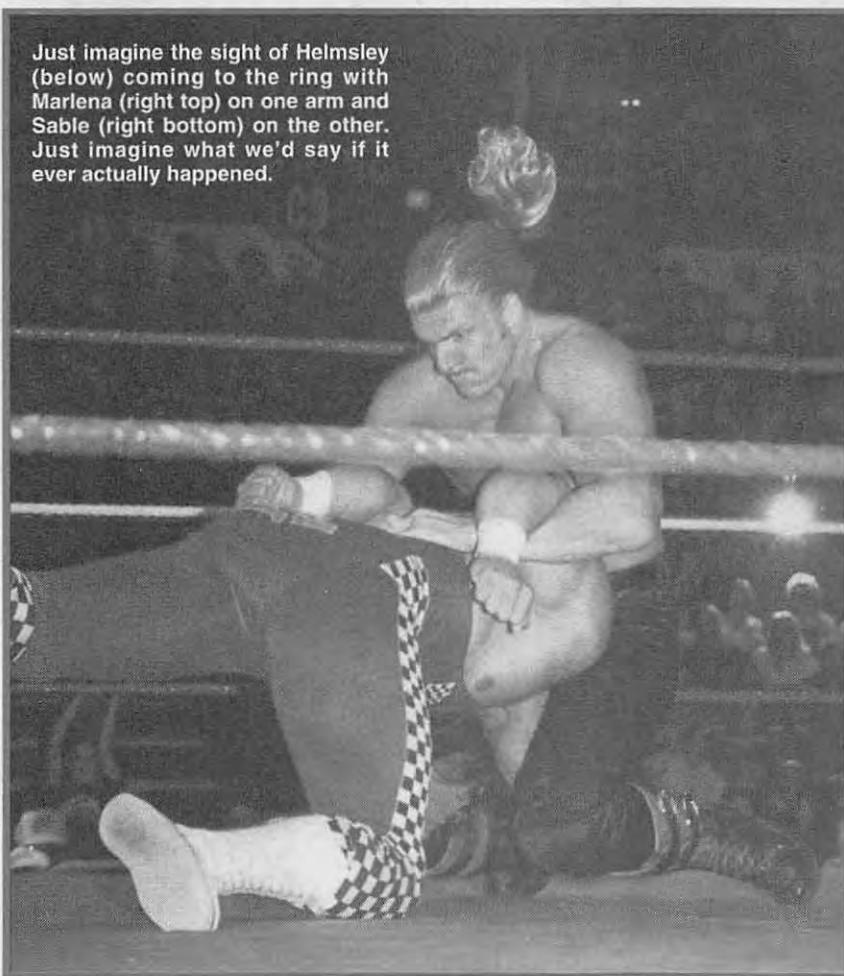
Thus, this twisted, jealous affair of heart was born.

"This stuff makes me puke," said Big Van Vader. "Why can't these bozos keep their hands and eyes to themselves? This is wrestling. Helmsley should spend more time defending his title and less time chasing the girls."

Certainly, Helmsley has been painted the bad guy during these affairs. But it seems odd that he would intentionally ostracize himself by harassing Marlena and Sable just when he was finally earning respect from fans and wrestlers alike.



Just imagine the sight of Helmsley (below) coming to the ring with Marlena (right top) on one arm and Sable (right bottom) on the other. Just imagine what we'd say if it ever actually happened.



"Anyone with three names has to be pretty arrogant," said Jake Roberts. "Helmsley thinks he can have any woman he wants. I find it despicable."

So does Goldust, who finally showed his true colors in defending Marlena's honor. On the *Monday Night Raw* following IYH XII, he shed his wig and robe and chased Helmsley around the arena. But isn't a long feud with Goldust too steep a price to pay for the chance to woo Marlena?

We asked Helmsley.

"I'm doing those two lovely ladies a favor," he said.

What?

"Sable and Marlena are begging me to steal them!" he continued. "This, you see, wasn't my idea. They both came to me and said, 'Hunter, I want to be around a real man.' They both said that to me separately. They both want me

to be their knight in shining armor.

"They can't just leave the buffoons they're with now, not publicly at least. That would be unladylike, but they're both quite unhappy. I must give them credit. They're very good actors. Marlena does a fine job pretending she loves being with Goldust, and Sable does the same with Mero. Soon enough they'll be enjoying the good life with me."

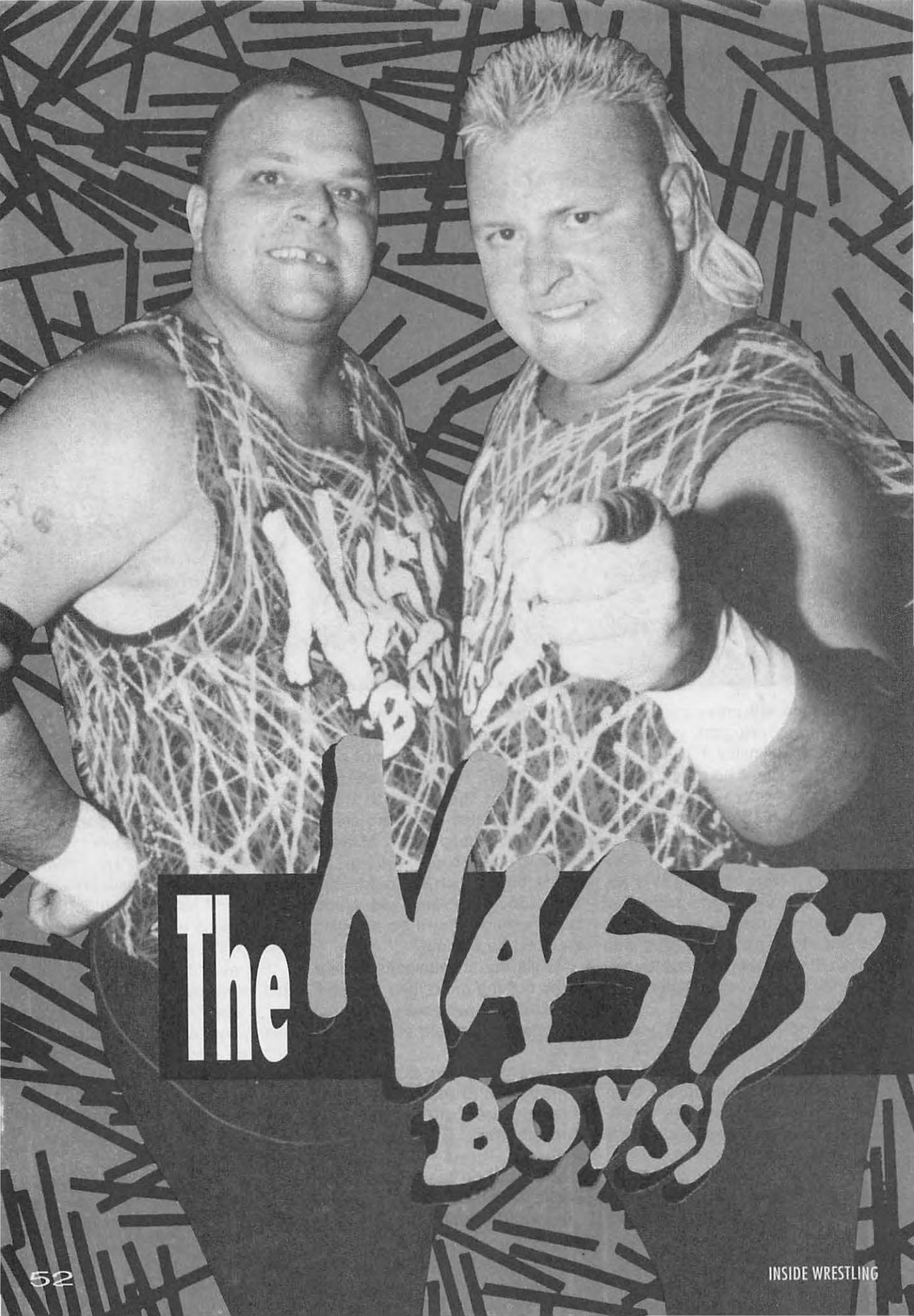
While the shenanigans appear to be nothing more than the work of a libidinous womanizer, let's not disregard them completely right away.

Remember, after all, what happened with Sunny. She went through three tag teams—The Bodydonnas, Godwinns, and Smokin' Gunns—in a month. Where the tag team gold went, Sunny followed. Now HHH has the I-C gold, Goldust has only a gold

outfit and gold face paint, and Mero has been struggling since losing the gold to Helmsley in October. These women *could* have a little bit of Sunny inside them. It *could* be that Sable isn't as innocent as she seems and that Marlena actually *enjoys* being with someone who calls himself a "real man," but we doubt it. Sable and Marlena both refused to comment on anything HHH said.

But even if it's not true, the fact that Helmsley would make such a claim speaks volumes about his raging ego. When will the courting, flirting, and interfering end? Perhaps when Goldust sheds the wig for good. Or if Mero can regain the gold I-C belt from Helmsley. Or when HHH's libido quiets down.

In other words, look for this "love affair" to continue for as long as there are daytime dramas. □



# The Dudley Boys

**Everyone thought  
The Nasty Boys were  
perfect additions to  
the NWO. Everyone,  
that is, except the  
NWO. Now Sags  
and Knobs are  
speaking out  
about what  
really happened—  
and leaving  
themselves open  
to brutal  
retribution  
for it**

Photos by John S. Pithers

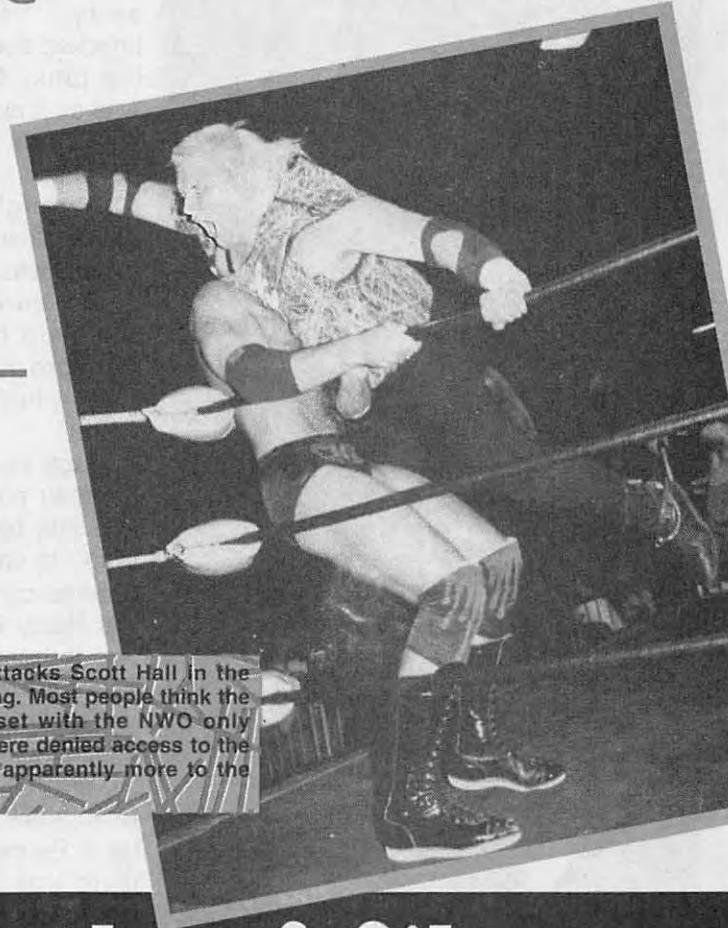
By Craig Peters

**T**HE NASTY BOYS are angry. They thought the whole world was about to be set at their feet.

Little did they know the rug was about to be pulled out from under them.

"It's a load of crap, that's what it is!" screamed Jerry Sags.

Brian Knobs attacks Scott Hall in the corner of the ring. Most people think the Nastys are upset with the NWO only because they were denied access to the group. There's apparently more to the story than that.



# Break The Code of Silence:

## "THE NWO TRIED TO SHAKE US DOWN!"



Hitting Nash with clotheslines (above) and punishing his legs (below)—it must feel good to Jerry Sags. He and Knobs did want to be part of the NWO, but not bad enough to pay for membership.



"These guys are running around like they own the place! And everybody's just getting out of their way! Well, we're drawing the line, and we're drawing it right here! The Nasty Boys ain't putting up with this NWO crap anymore!

damon business, but I'll just call him Tony for now—Tony, you see, had this pizza joint. Best pizza in Pennsylvania. Packed 'em in. Great delivery business. Made money hand over fist."

"Then he got a visit from the

And we ain't keeping quiet anymore, either!"

What's to keep quiet about, Jerry? You were in tight with Hulk Hogan and Kevin Nash and Scott Hall. You were invited to some of the insider NWO parties. You were at the eye of the NWO hurricane.

Then you got blown away. Set up and knocked down like bowling pins. Turns out it was all a plot by the NWO from the get-go, right?

"Wrong!" declared Brian Knobs. "That's what it looks like, sure. But there's a hell of a lot more to it than that! A hell of a lot more!"

Sags sat back in his chair and began to quietly tell a story from his childhood. Strange considering this Nasty Boy prefers to boast about how he's going to demolish his next opponent.

"When me and Brian were growing up in Pennsylvania, there was this guy who owned a pizza parlor."

Knobs nodded his head in assent, knowing exactly the story Sags was about to tell.

"Tony—that's not his real name, his real name is none o' your

man," Knobs said, laying his index finger alongside his nose and raising his eyebrows. The implication was anything but subtle: Organized crime had come knocking on Tony's door.

"Yep," Sags continued. "The man told Tony to pay up. But Tony, he had pride. He thought he could stand up to the man. And Tony did have pride. He just didn't have the muscle to back it up. Tony didn't pay in money, but he paid in a lot more than money."

Sags and Knobs sat a moment



By telling this shocking story about getting "shaken down" by the NWO, Knobs knows that he and Sags are leaving themselves open to further attacks by Nash and the rest of the NWO. They're not worried, though.

in wistful silence.

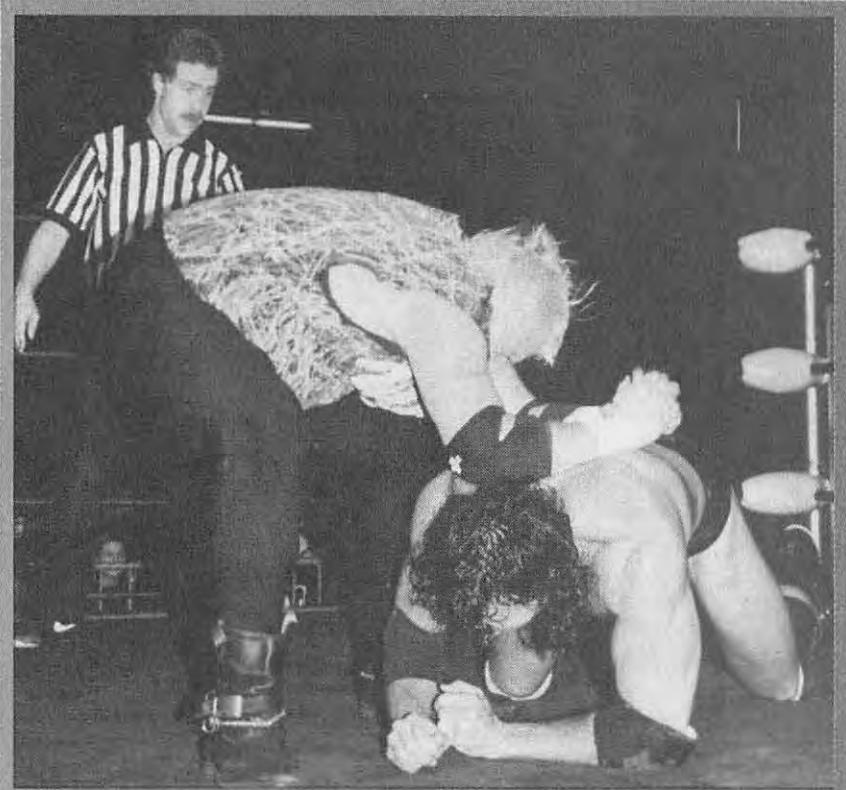
"Man," Knobs said, "everybody missed that pizza."

Sags agreed.

"And damn it all if the NWO isn't Tony all over again," Knobs said. "It's shakedown street out there."

Sags looked the interviewer directly in the eyes.

"The NWO is running a protection racket," Sags said in deadly seriousness. "The NWO tried to shake us down! Everybody has to



So the brawls between the Nastys and Hall and Nash will continue. Members of the NWO can deny the claims made by the Nastys all they want, but we suspect they might just be telling the truth this time.

kick in. And I'm not talking pocket change, I'm talking serious insurance money. Not hundreds. *Thousands*. Per man. And Hogan pulls the purse strings."

"That's why he never signed our contracts," Knobs added. "We refused to pay. First ones. First to buck the NWO, and what did it get us? It got us made examples of. That's what it got us. Because you can bet the farm that if Vincent or Six or Bischoff missed a payment, they'd all gang up on them the way they ganged up on the Nastys."

By way of response, Hulk Hogan laughed long and loud and heartily.

"That is about the stupidest thing I have heard in my entire life!" he said. "The fact of the matter is that Sags and Knobs couldn't cut it, brother!"

"The NWO has a very high standard of membership," said Ted DiBiase. "Sags and Knobs were looked at, sure, and they

were looked at very closely. But when push came to shove, it became very clear that they simply don't have what it takes to be team players in the New World Order. They're all about themselves, they're not about organization and long-term thinking. It became evident well into the interview process that they didn't display the loyalty necessary for NWO membership. So we simply did what we had to do. If they have a problem with that, I don't care."

"Loyalty? Bull!" Sags howled. "The only thing we didn't display to DiBiase and Hogan's satisfaction was a checkbook!"

"Nonsense!" said Six. "I haven't paid a dime to the NWO in protec-

tion money. The idea that this is some sort of a racket—ridiculous! That's as small-time as it gets! The NWO isn't small-time in any way, shape, or form. In fact, the NWO is as big-time as it comes."

Vincent shared Six's denial.

"I am being treated better by the NWO than I've ever been treated my entire career. Case closed, end of story. Protection money? Right! Give me a break! That's the stupidest thing I ever heard!"

But Sags and Knobs are sticking by their story.

"Listen to all the denials you want," Sags said, "but if the FBI or the IRS knew one-tenth of what's going on inside the NWO, they'd

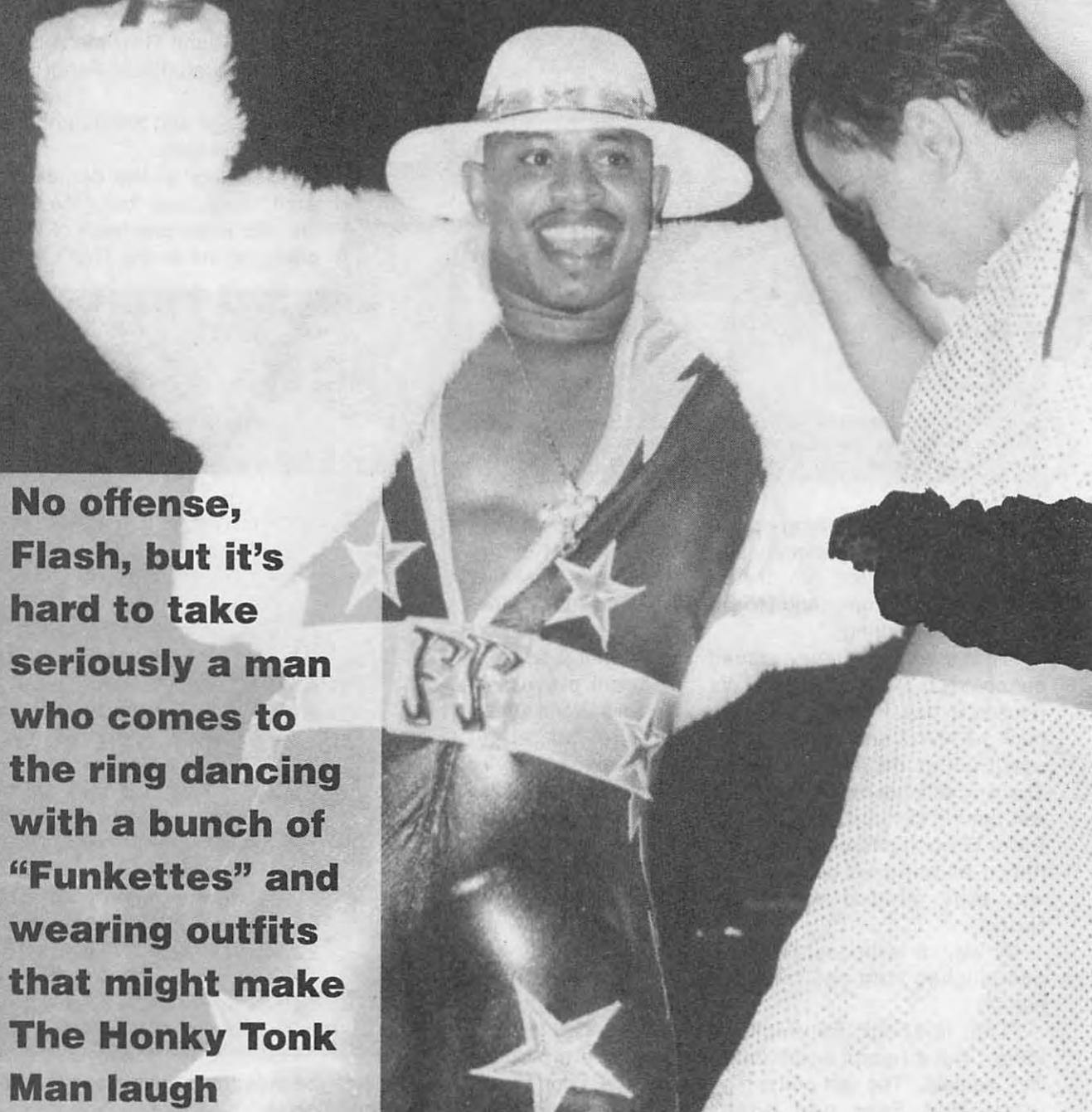


be brought to their knees in a second."

Knobs inhaled deeply and thoughtfully.

"The IRS," he mused. "That's how they got Al Capone, you know." □

# Party-Hearty



**No offense,  
Flash, but it's  
hard to take  
seriously a man  
who comes to  
the ring dancing  
with a bunch of  
"Funkettes" and  
wearing outfits  
that might make  
The Honky Tonk  
Man laugh**

# Flash Funk

**Don't Be Fooled ...  
He's A Serious Threat!**



**By Bryan Ethier**

**S**HAWN MICHAELS. Marc Mero. Chris Benoit. Chris Jericho. Rey Misterio Jr. Flash Funk.

What is the common denominator of these six wrestlers?

Answer: They are all high-flying, acrobatic, technically sound wrestlers.

And they are part of a new force in wrestling—the smallish, but quick, skilled, aerial experts.

Are we now witnessing a new trend in the WWF, where the lumbering, behemoth-like wrestlers such as "Psycho" Sid, Big Van Vader, and Yokozuna are being supplanted by smaller, faster grapplers who use their smarts and repertoire of daredevil moves to defeat their bigger, stronger foes? Well, one might argue that since (at press time) Sid was World champ, there is still room for the wrestler who wins with chicanery, muscle, and a big boot to the face.

But is Sid a member of the dinosaur family, bordering on extinction?

With the success of swift technicians such as Mero and Michaels, the future of the WWF might belong to the 6', 225-pound "cruiserweights."

You can add Flash Funk to the list of acrobatic stars.

True, only a few weeks into his tenure with the WWF, Funk, formerly 2 Cold Scorpio, had not turned the federation on its collective ear the way Michaels, Mero, and, to some extent, Rocky Maivia have. But like his cruiserweight colleagues, Funk has already displayed the mettle of a future champ. Like Michaels, Funk has proved he can win even when he has an off-night. Like Mero, Funk has displayed a propensity and passion for using dangerous aerial moves, which not only dazzle the audience, but also confuse opponents.

"I like today's streamlined, quick wrestlers," remarked legendary manager Capt. Lou Albano. "Guys like Flash Funk, Marc Mero, and the others make for really exciting matches. They bring a flair to the squared circle. We've seen what Michaels can do, and he's no mountain of a man. Mero was a champion in two



What a beautiful out-of-the-ring splash Flash Funk used on Leif Cassidy at *In Your House XII*. Pretty impressive for a man known more for his dancing and outrageous outfits.

federations. I see big things for Flash Funk, baby."

Albano, long-respected for his ability to recognize raw talent in a wrestler, certainly is rendering his conclusions based as much on Funk's past as on his brief, yet successful WWF career. In fact, during his tenure with WCW and ECW, Funk (then known as Scorpio) was reputed as one of the sport's premier tag team wrestlers. In 1993, he and Marcus Bagwell captured the WCW World tag

team title. Although the pair relinquished the belts just 20 days later, Funk had established himself as a wrestler to be respected.

He went on to capture the ECW TV title and even defeated Sabu a few times. But now he has decided to bring his moonsault and other aerial moves to the WWF.

"I think his timing is just right," said Mil Mascaras, one of the greatest high-flyers of all-time. "I got to see him when I came back to the WWF as a broadcaster in December, and I saw that he had the drive and the stamina to be one of the most exciting wrestlers in the world. He just needs to develop a little more patience and understanding of how and when to use these dangerous aerial maneuvers. You can't leave yourself vulnerable by constantly flying out of control. But I think he has the savvy now to be a title contender."

"I've even seen him train since he came to the WWF," Mascaras continued. "He's very, very dedicated. I saw him train in Mexico many years ago, too. Very serious. Takes his workout schedule very seriously. People see him with the crazy outfit, the women, the dancing, and the music, and they think he's all



Funk has been accused of being the kind of wrestler who can execute a few spectacular moves in a match but isn't that strong fundamentally. Wrong. He patiently wore down Cassidy using a wristlock (above) and arm-drag take-downs (left).



show. That isn't true."

Mascaras has a good point. Funk is a threat. He's dedicated, and he has that extensive experience in WCW, ECW, Japan, and elsewhere.

What he must avoid are out-of-ring distractions. Michaels lost the WWF belt, ostensibly, because he was too busy attending to his injured mentor, Jose Lothario, during a title match with Sid. Michaels also became consumed with his own self-image, the endless publicity shoots, the fans, his ego.

Mero didn't know whether to play mind games with Sable, Marlena, "Mr. Perfect," or his own ego. Immensely talented, he possessed the I-C title only slightly longer than a kiss remains fresh on a young boy's cheek.

Maivia is being touted as a future champ—at least by Sunny, who has gazed at him with adoring eyes. Funk will have to compete with all these men for time in



Funk (kicking Mikey Whipwreck in his days as 2 Cold Scorpio) had a very successful stint in ECW before he signed with the WWF. Before that, he did well in WCW. This man is no unproven rookie!

the WWF's spotlight.

"Flash Funk knows what he is getting into," advised Big Van Vader, who got to know him soon after Funk made his pro debut.

"He better not get too obsessed with that fancy crap, because there are a lot of guys, me included, who don't go for that. We'll teach him what serious wrestling is all about."

The 5'11", 222-pound native of Denver has been more flash than substance early on in his WWF career. During the WWF's In Your House XII, he appeared tentative and nervous during his match with Leif Cassidy. In fact, Cassidy controlled much of the bout until Funk's natural talent won out. Funk dazzled the audience with an amazing splash to earn the pin. Since then, he has scored wins over mid-card talent.

"I'm not getting overly excited with my first few matches," Funk warned after the PPV match. "I'm just getting used to wrestling in a new federation. The opposition here is better, faster, and stronger than anywhere else in the world. I'll be fine. I have confidence in my skills and my knowledge of the sport. I like to party and have a good time, but Flash Funk also does his homework."

Now he just has to try to hope he gets a passing grade in the WWF. □



This flying body press definitely stunned Cassidy. Funk wants it known that he didn't come to the WWF just to have a good time. He's very serious about winning titles there.

**"WATCH ME TEAR APART YOUR LEGEND!"**

**S**ABU FEARS TAZ." That statement is becoming a catch phrase in ECW. Taz and his manager, former referee Bill Alfonso, have repeated it on numerous occasions. Fans of Taz have filled arenas with signs bearing the bold assertion. One "Sabu Fears Taz" sign was shown on WWF TV when Taz stormed a WWF ring during a live *Monday Night Raw* in September.

At one time in their respective careers, the fear factor didn't play a role in the combative relationship between the two ECW competitors. Taz and Sabu once held the ECW tag team title together. There was mutual respect between the two then, but they were never close friends.

For a man who is known for violence and vicious-

ness, Taz has a solid scientific background. He was once a successful amateur wrestler. But for the last four years, the ultra-intense suplex master has made ECW his home. Until about two years ago, he had most of the bloodthirsty fans on his side.

But that changed when Taz aligned with Alfonso. Taz has become a very bitter man who wants to destroy Sabu, mainly because he doesn't feel he's loyal to ECW. Senior Writer Steve Anderson met Taz after an ECW show in Philadelphia to discuss his relationship with Sabu, Alfonso, ECW fans, and surprisingly, *INSIDE WRESTLING* and its sister publications.

"He was just what I expected," reported Anderson. "He's all business, and he likes to get right to the point."

**Q:** I know you're not much for small talk, so let's get started.

**A:** It's nice that I am finally getting some ink in this magazine. I'm glad you could squeeze me in between articles about the legendary Sabu.

**Q:** Since Sabu seems to be on your mind a lot, let's talk about your past, present, and future with him.

**A:** The past consisted of Sabu coming and going, coming and going, and coming and going. Sabu would be in ECW one day and gone the next. He has no sense of loyalty to the promotion. He's loyal to himself. He'll wrestle in ECW when it's convenient for him. But he'd rather be in Japan getting his ego stroked.

**Q:** You two had a successful partnership for a while. You guys won the ECW tag team title. How did the relationship deteriorate to where it is now?

**A:** Very simple. Sabu's ego. He is very selfish. I could never rely on him being around because he was always flying off to Japan. Sometimes he would be scheduled to wrestle in ECW and Japan on the same night. He would choose Japan and screw me over without thinking twice about it. The eighth of April, 1995. That's what he did then, and he was

fired from ECW. Then he went to WCW, and when that wasn't working out, we welcomed him back. I didn't.

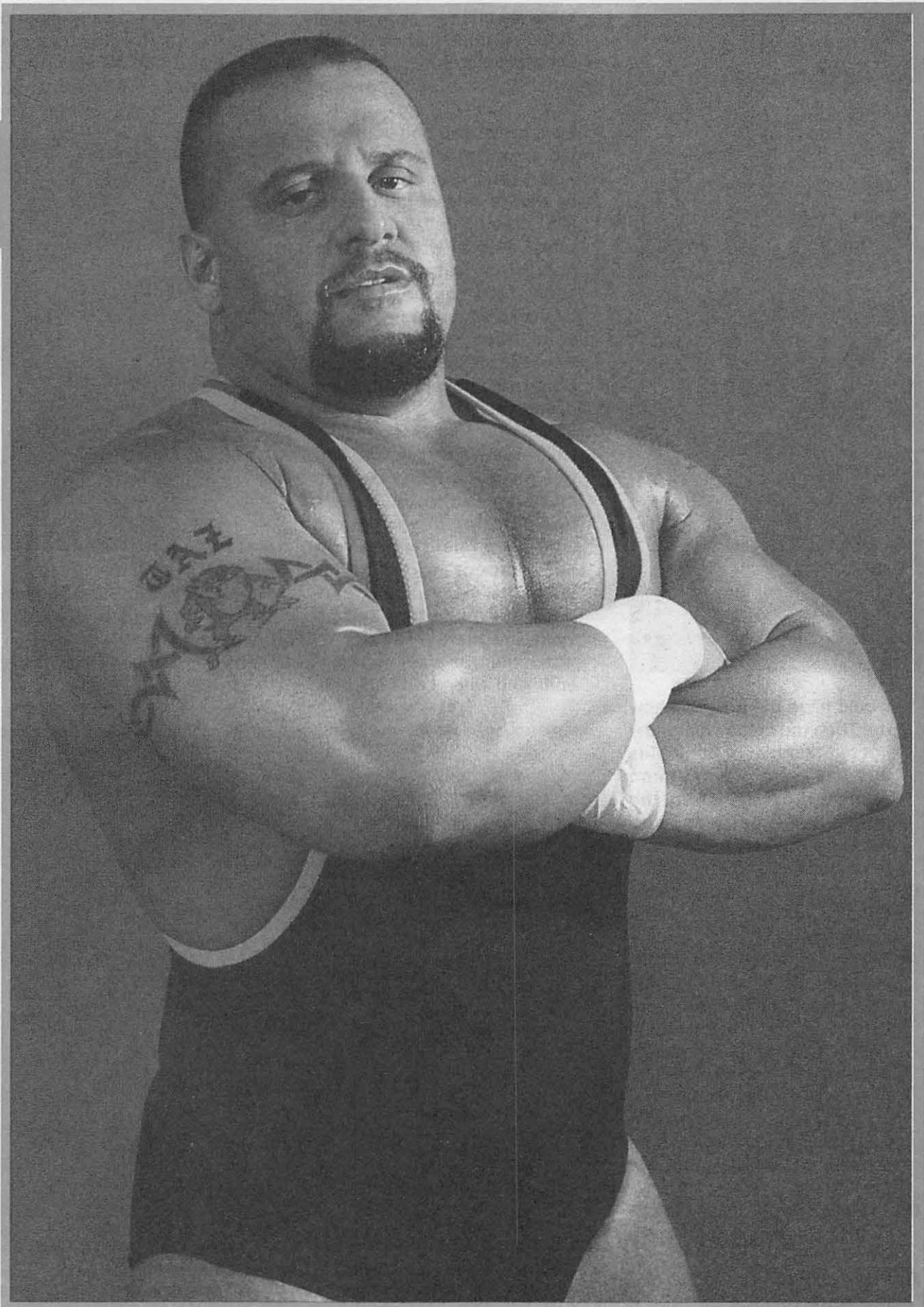
**Q:** How would you rate him as a tag team partner?

**A:** Athletically, Sabu is the best partner I ever had. I never lacked confidence in his skills. But he lacks every other quality that makes a good tag team wrestler. When you're selfish, you can't possibly be a good tag team wrestler. If his head was right today, I'd be glad to team with him again, but it isn't.

**Q:** Let's talk about ECW's recent "November To Remember" card. Tell us in your own words what happened.

**A:** I was at my wits' end with Sabu, so I went to the ring and called him out. I had been calling him out for months and even had to go on WWF television to embarrass him. I honestly never thought that he

**"Sabu would be in ECW one day and gone the next. He has no sense of loyalty to the promotion. He's loyal to himself. He'll wrestle in ECW when it's convenient."**



**"Athletically, Sabu is the best partner I ever had. But ... when you're selfish, you can't possibly be a good tag team wrestler."**



would have the guts to show up. Then the lights went out. I figured that him or one of his buddies were playing mind games with me. Then the lights came back on, and there he was. I couldn't wait to get my hands on him.

**Q: You had a brief fight before the lights went out again. What happened?**

**A: Basically, what you didn't see was me getting the best of Sabu. I can wrestle in bright light or pitch dark. That's how good Taz is. We battled back to the locker rooms. But I was beating the crap out of him. His ego and body couldn't stand it, so he retreated. He backed off, not me.**

**Q: Did that change your opinion of Sabu? Do you still think he fears you?**

**A: I was glad to see that he had the guts to face me like a**

man. He still ran away, but it gives me hope that we'll finally have a match.

**Q: What do you hope to prove by beating Sabu?**

**A: I will prove you and your stupid magazines wrong. Every time I pick up a copy of this or PWI or one of the others, it's "Sabu this" and "Sabu that." All you write about is how great Sabu is. I don't know if it's you or Bill Apter or whoever, but someone in your office must be a good friend of his, because he gets a lot more coverage than he deserves.**

**Q: You're saying he's overrated?**

**A: He's damn good, sure, but not as good as you guys make him out to be. There's no room for guys like me who have talent along with self-respect and dignity. When the match finally happens, I'll invite you and all your magazine friends to watch me tear apart your legend! And when I do beat him,**

your magazines will have no choice but to give Taz the coverage that he deserves. Build him up all you want, because I'm gonna tear him



down. I'll get to Sabu if I have to go through every ECW wrestler to do it.

**Q: Including Rob Van Dam, his tag team partner?**



Taz and Sabu clashed in some violent matches back in 1993, but Taz has changed a lot since then. He has become more focused and more serious about his wrestling in the last few years.



Taz uses two of his famous suplexes to punish Rob Van Dam, Sabu's regular ECW tag team partner. He has nothing personal against Van Dam, but is upset that Van Dam tried to stop him from getting at Sabu.

**A:** Van Dam's been in the wrong place at the wrong time. He'll never be the same after I beat him. He stopped me from getting at Sabu a few times, and he paid for it. No offense, but someone with my amateur wrestling background is not going to lose to a martial artist like Van Dam. I choked him out like all the rest. I just used Van Dam to get to Sabu. They talk about "respect" matches. Respect is not something that comes out of one match. To get respect, you must give it back. That's impossible for Sabu.

**Q:** Tell me about your relationship with Bill Alfonso. You lost a great many fans when you hooked up with him.

**A:** Strictly professional. He handles my business affairs, my flights, and my hotel reservations so I can focus on wrestling. I wouldn't consider us close friends. We don't hang out together after the matches. Fonzie likes to go out and party all night with women. I'm more mellow and focused.

**Q:** What do you do after the shows are over?

**A:** I go home to my family. Plus I always will be a student of this sport. I watch hours of tape

from my matches, Sabu's matches, and anyone else that I plan on wrestling. There's always more you can learn.

**Q:** You say you're a student of the sport, but you're also a teacher.

**A:** That's right. I teach at the ECW training school.

**Q:** How would you describe your style as a wrestling instructor?

**A:** The entire program I teach lasts about eight to 12 months. And it's not easy. I am tough, but I'm also fair. I consider myself a perfectionist, and I demand the same out of my students. I won't force anyone to try something that they're athletically not capable of doing. Right now, out of all the guys who started, many have dropped out because they couldn't hack it.

**Q:** Anybody remaining with potential?

**A:** There are two guys right now who are taking everything that is being given to them. They'll probably see some ECW ring time before too long.

**Q:** You seem to be a loner in ECW. Do you have any friends there?

**A:** The Eliminators. We hang out together when we get a free moment, which isn't too often. Perry Saturn also teaches with me. I'd love to be their partner in some six-man matches.

**Q:** They also hold the ECW tag title. Any chance you'll challenge them?

**A:** If you want to be successful in this business, you have to wear the gold. I'm starting to think more and more about titles. You want to hear something strange? I think my best shot at those belts would be with Sabu as my partner. But that could only happen if he got his head on straight.

**Q:** When your match with Sabu happens, what'll be your strategy going in?

**A:** I wouldn't want to beat him right away. I'd want to beat him at my game, which is

wrestling. As daring as he is, I know he can wrestle, because we've trained together. If he made me wrestle a reckless style, I'd beat him at that, too, but by keeping him on the mat, it's a slower torture. I'd work on each body part until he was physically unable to continue. I'd defeat him, injure him, and maybe end his career. It'd be a great match.

**Q:** You truly think you could end his career?

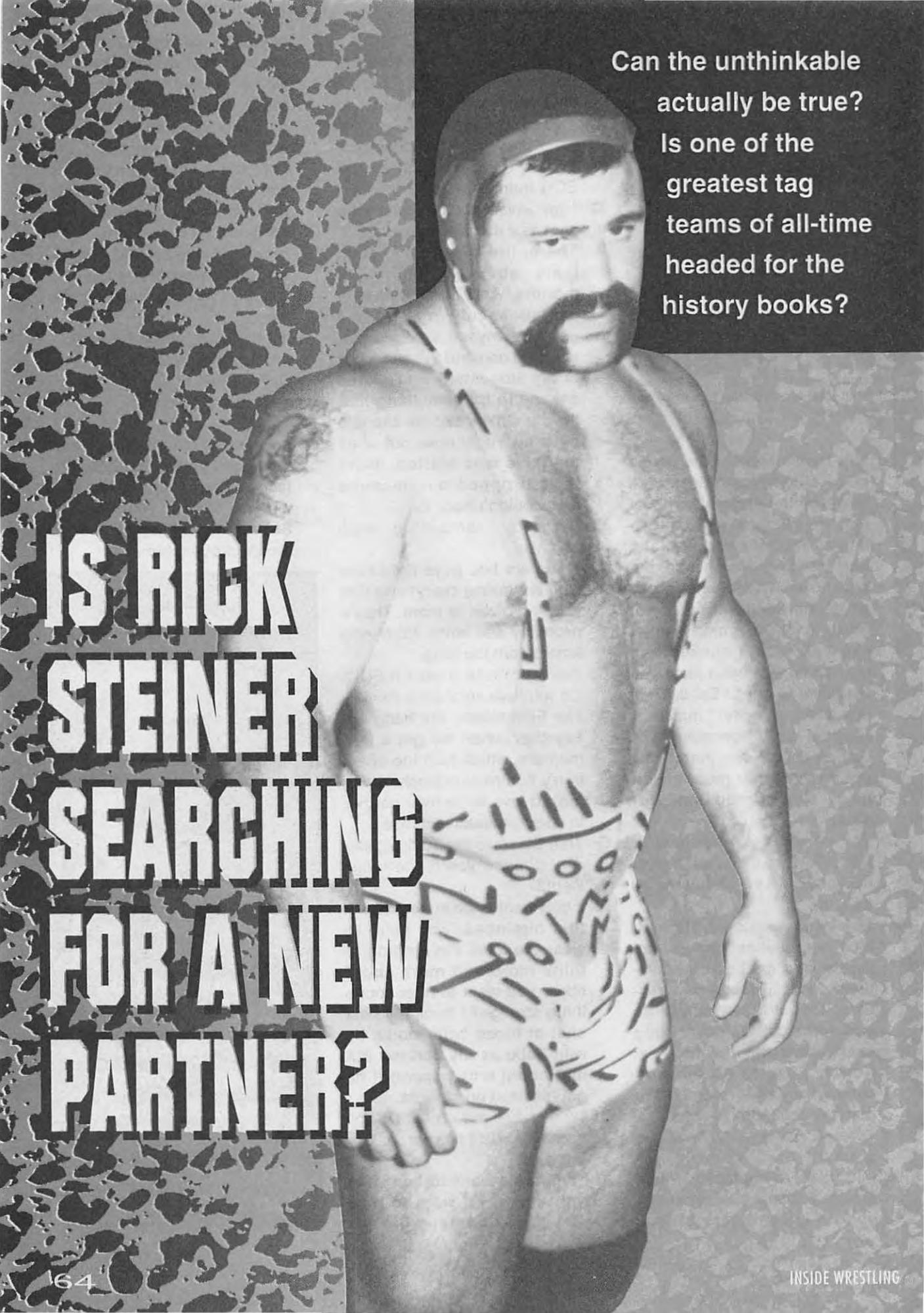
**A:** If it happens, so be it. But like I said before, after I eliminate Sabu, I will finally get the recognition I deserve.

**Q:** From us?

**A:** I will be the man who beat and destroyed your hero, Sabu. My face will be on the cover. You will no longer write about Sabu fearing me, but about Taz destroying him. □

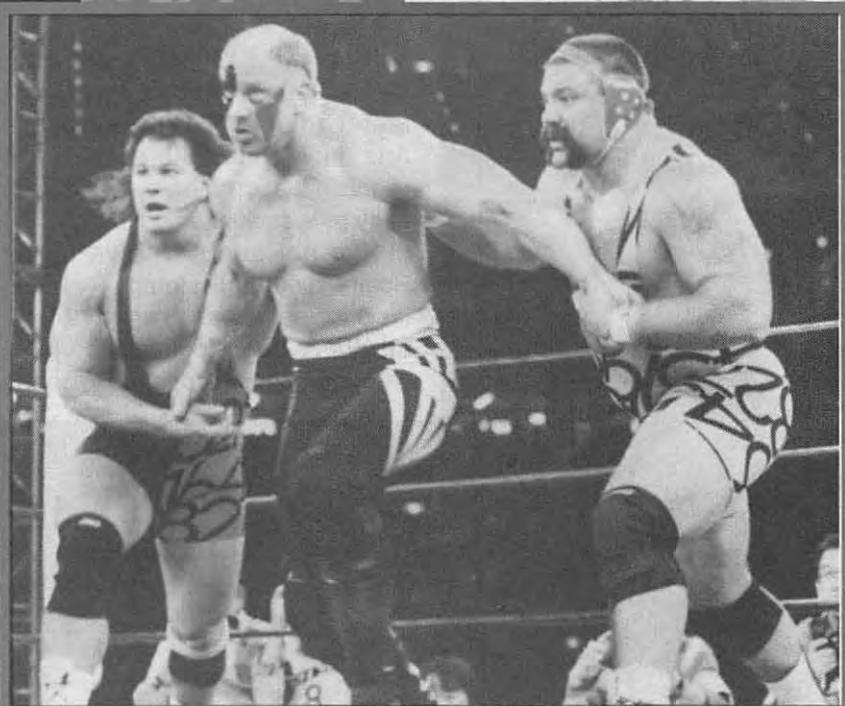


**"I always will be a student of this sport. I watch hours of tape from my matches, Sabu's matches, and anyone else that I plan on wrestling."**



Can the unthinkable  
actually be true?  
Is one of the  
greatest tag  
teams of all-time  
headed for the  
history books?

# IS RICK STEINER SEARCHING FOR A NEW PARTNER?



The Steiner Brothers double-team Road Warrior Hawk during a match in Japan. At press time, Scott was ready to return after suffering a back injury, but that doesn't mean Rick isn't looking at potential replacements for his brother.

championship gold to finance a new wing at Fort Knox.

And they might be through.

"Outrageous!"

That's the reaction of Rick Steiner to the charges that he's looking to dump his brother, Scott, as his tag team partner.

It's no coincidence that it's also the reaction of Scott to reports that Rick has been searching for a new partner.

"Hey, I don't think I have to explain myself to anyone," says Rick. "What I do is my own business, and I don't need to have any reporters sniffing around my business. But if ya gotta know, I'll tell you this much: Use your own eyes, okay? Fact of the matter is that Scott was on the shelf for a while, I've been injury-free, and I'm a tag team wrestler first and foremost. So what do you think is going on?"

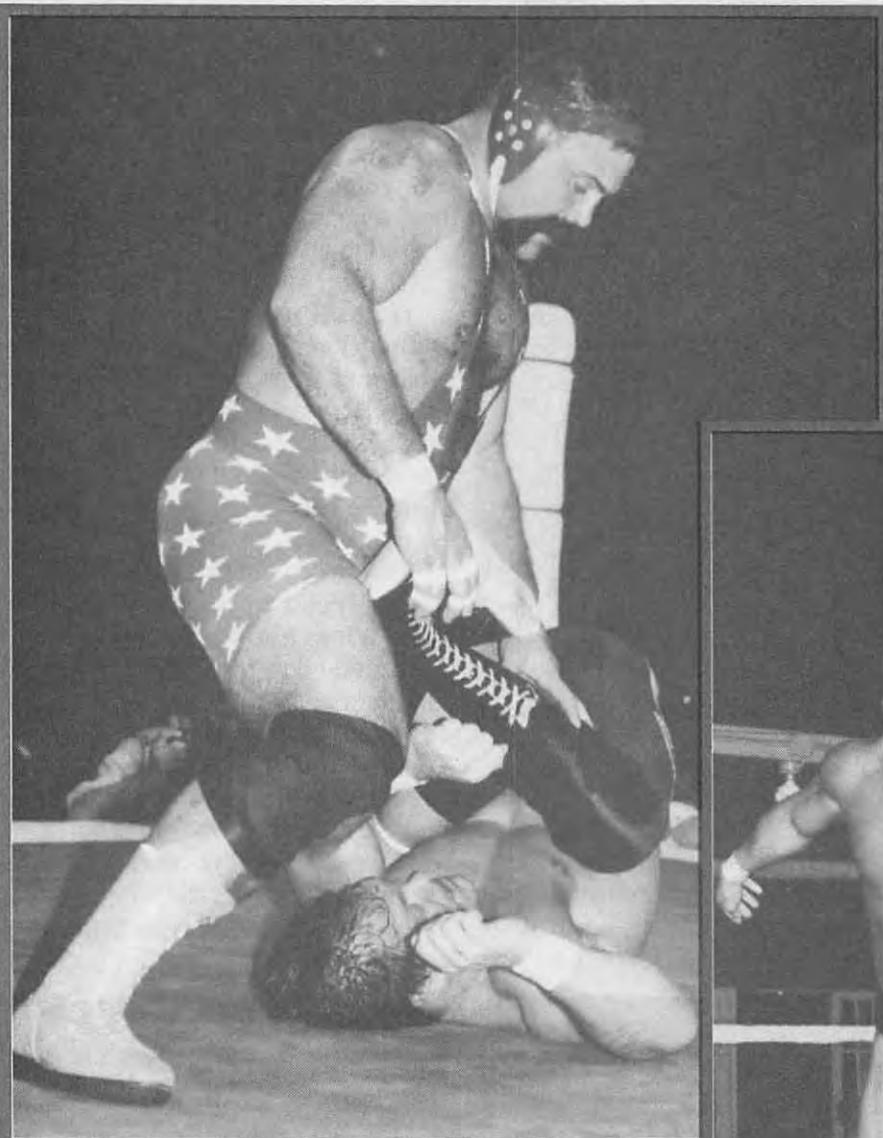
By Craig Peters

THEY WERE TAG Team of the Year twice, in 1990 and 1993. Most recently, they were second runners-up for that honor. They've worn enough



Rick Steiner won the NWA U.S. tag team title with Eddie Gilbert in 1989 (left), 18 months before he captured the championship with Scott (above). He's a great tag team wrestler even if he's not paired with his brother.





What some people think is going on is that Rick has at least thought about giving up on his brother, that he became frustrated when his brother was forced to take so many months off to let his back heal. And after all, does anyone know if Scott will ever be 100 percent again?

So, goes the prevailing wisdom, Rick is quietly searching for a new partner.

"Yeah, as a matter of fact he has asked me to tag with him a few times," said Lex Luger. "We talked about it some, and we might even do it a bit. But as far as being a long-term partnership? No, he hasn't mentioned anything like that at all. I'm happy to help

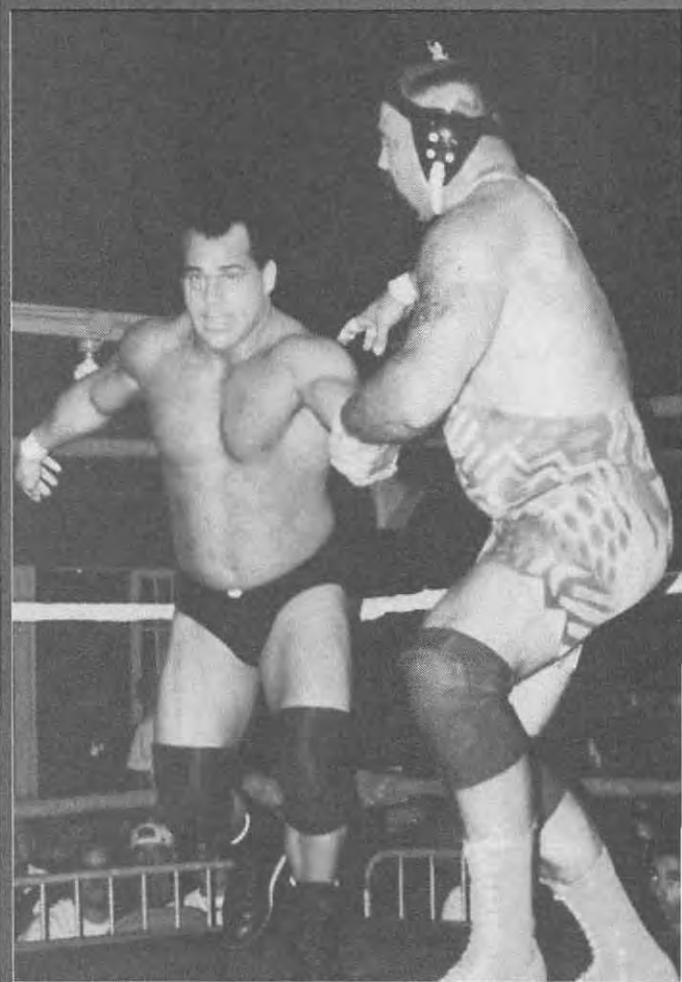
out a friend in need, but I'm not about to tie myself down in a long-term partnership. And besides, Scott'll be as good as new. You'll see."

Or maybe he won't be. One WCW insider close to the Steiners says that Scott's condition was worse than he ever let on, that he even though he made the decision to come back, he's still in pain. Another insider reports that Scott is "very close" to 100 percent, but that Rick still wants out of

the team.

Where the Steiners are concerned, the rumors are flying faster than a "Frankensteiner." And finding the truth at the heart of the situation isn't a particularly easy proposition.

"I'm not about to give up on Scott—that's ridiculous!" Rick told *INSIDE WRESTLING*. "He's my brother! We've been together too long, won too many titles, and made too



Chris Benoit (above left), Dean Malenko (above), and Lex Luger (opposite page, right) are just three of the men Rick has wrestled solo recently. All three would likely make good tag team partners for him.

big a name for ourselves. You think I'm gonna chuck all that? No way!"

"Don't believe Rick for a minute," says Marcus Bagwell. "After all, what would you expect him to say? Before I smartened up and joined the NWO, I had a talk with

Rick about the team. He was worried. He told me he didn't think Scott had it in him to return, that he was gonna stay sidelined forever. And that even if he did come back, that Rick had doubts about whether Scott was really committed to the team. Eric Bischoff told me he had the same talk with Rick. It's sad, really. They were great once, but they're falling apart."

"What the hell, you're gonna believe a backstabber like Bagwell?" Rick protested. "He's NWO now. You can't believe a word any of those guys say! He's making all that crap up just to drive a wedge

between me and my brother! Man, I'd like to get my hands on him! He's a greedy punk. Wait until he feels one of my clotheslines. He'll never forget it!"

But whether or not you believe there's a grain of truth in what Bagwell says, the fact of the matter remains that the situation has forced Rick to seek new partners, and that's beginning to grate on Scott's nerves.

A lot.

"I don't know, man," Scott said wearily. "You know, we've always stuck together. There's no need for him to worry about a future without me. No injury's gonna

keep me down. Six months from now, everyone will have forgotten about my back problems. I mean, what's he trying to prove, anyway?"

"See, in tag team wrestling, it's all teamwork and timing, it's all knowing the inside of your partner's head, his thinking, as much as it is knowing the moves. Rick goes and starts tagging with some other partners, he's gonna mess that up. If he even goes and talks to other people, that means he's not 100 percent focused on what we're tryin' to do. With all these great teams in WCW right now, we gotta be at our best."

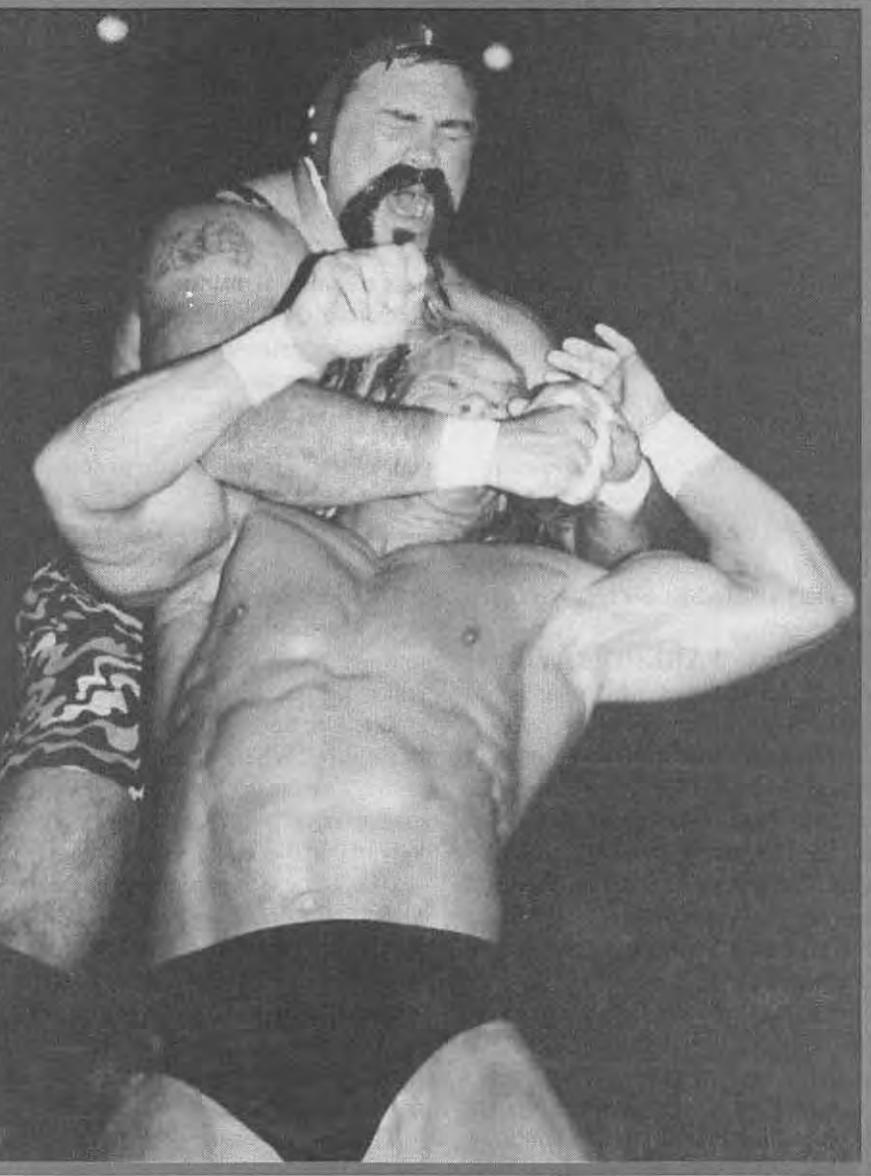
"Scott's gotta cut me some slack," Rick said. "He's just gettin' nervous because he's been out so long. Anything I did, I did for us. It's important for me to stay in shape and stay sharp. Otherwise, we both might as well hang it up."

But it might already have been hung up. Luger is just one name on a short list of about a half-dozen wrestlers that Rick has reportedly approached, none of whom would talk with *INSIDE WRESTLING* about the situation. And if Rick decides at any point in the next few months that Scott isn't what he used to be, there's a very good chance one of those names will answer the call and join Rick.

After all, what wrestler *wouldn't* want to team with one of the greatest tag team competitors of all-time? Imagine Chris Jericho and Rick Steiner as a team. Or Dean Malenko. Or Chris Benoit. Or Jeff Jarrett. There are wrestlers who would add immeasurably to a duo also comprised of Rick Steiner; then there are those who would pay a year's income to learn what Rick has to teach them.

Finding a taker isn't a problem. It's all up to Rick ... if and when he finally decides to pop the question.

And all Scott can do is hope it's a question that's more in the media than in his brother's mind. □



The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One On One

**E**VER SINCE THE New World Order was formed back in July, the organization has been actively recruiting top stars. Some of that recruiting has been done in public, but much of it has been done behind the scenes, away from the cameras. Founding members Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, and Scott Hall, after all, have a lot of pull in the sport.

It wasn't until Ted DiBiase joined the organization, however, that the NWO had the necessary financial capital to really think about a major expansion. With DiBiase willing to spend whatever it takes to make the NWO more powerful, the nefarious group has reportedly had wrestlers lined up to sign on. In the last few months, Marcus Bagwell, M. Wall Street, Big Bubba Rogers, and Masa Chono have all donned NWO T-shirts. But the NWO has also made no secret of the fact that it wanted "Diamond" Dallas Page in its fold.

Hall and Nash even approached him on several editions of *Nitro* to ask him to join them. Page, however, has remained loyal to WCW, where he has won a TV title and a Battlebowl ring. He said if the NWO really wanted him, he should have been asked to join the group when it was first formed.

Unfortunately for him, the NWO doesn't like to get turned down by anyone. So Hall (who was once managed by Page in WCW) and Nash (who was once his tag team partner) attacked DDP during his Starrcade match with Eddy Guerrero, which happened to be the finals of the tournament for the vacant U.S. title, and cost him a win.

We decided to provide a forum for DiBiase and Page to speak directly regarding Page's status with WCW and now improbable future in the

# ONE O



**"Being on your own is fine, but when it all hits the fan, you get beat up alone, you lose matches alone, and you lose opportunities alone."**

—Ted DiBiase

NWO. They had some interesting things to say when they got together, "One On One."

**TED DiBIASE:** So how you feeling, Page?

**DALLAS PAGE:** You got nerve asking me that after what your goons did to me.

**TD:** Don't take it personal, Page. It was all business.

**DP:** Yeah, your business that cost me the U.S. title. I had that match won until Hall dropped me on my head. If I was ever even mildly interested in the NWO, that all went out the window that night.

**TD:** So you admit that you were interested. Does that mean that you still are?

**DP:** You've been sniffing the ink from all that money in your mattress, DiBiase. After all, that fee for joining

your little group was a little steep for a superstar like me.

**TD:** Fee? What fee? You're out of your mind, Page.

**DP:** All I know is that in the paperwork you guys sent me, there was a note about this fee involved to join. You're not getting any of my money.

**TD:** Oh, here we go with that rumor again. Where did you get that from? The Nasty Boys, right? You guys make stuff like that up and everybody is stupid enough to believe you.

**DP:** You and I know what I'm sayin' is true. I don't pay to play. That's the bottom line. If you asked me for a nickel, it wouldn't be worth it. And do you actually think I'd join your organization now? Is that your best recruiting effort, costing me a belt? It was improbable once. It is now impossible.

**TD:** Don't consider it an attack that cost you the NWO U.S. title. Think of

# N ONE



**"I'll get that U.S. title without your help. Consider that a guarantee. And when I do get it, your boys can line up to try and take it away."**

—Dallas Page

it as a wakeup call. All Hall and Nash wanted to do was knock some sense into your head. They're your friends. Besides, they spared you.

**DP:** Spared me? How?

**TD:** Whoever won that U.S. belt would have a target painted on their back. Look what we did to Guerrero after we got through with you. We beat him up and took the belt. You dodged a bullet, courtesy of your friends Hall and Nash.

**DP:** Hall and Nash. Some friends.

**TD:** They want the best for you. Whether you like it or not, that's the NWO.

**DP:** How many times do I have to say no before you get it through that thick skull of yours? DDP has done it on his own since he started. No one believed in me but me, and I proved them all wrong by winning the TV belt, a Battlebowl ring, and the /Pro

*Wrestling Illustrated*] Most Improved Wrestler award [for 1995].

**TD:** Listen, Page. I have more experience than you do. Being on your own is fine, but when it all hits the fan, you get beat up alone, you lose matches alone, and you lose opportunities alone. Be careful what you wish for.

**DP:** The only thing I wish for is for you, Hall, and Nash, and the rest of the goons to stay out of my stinkin' business. Just because I have a history with Nash and Hall doesn't mean I approve of what they're doing.

**TD:** Since when do you stand for what's good? You busted your share of rules. Don't be left in the dust with those other WCW losers. Learn from Starrcade.

**DP:** Learn from Starrcade? The only thing I learned from Starrcade is that Nash and Hall are garbage. They

were great when they were with me, but since then, they've become nothing more than trailer park trash.

**TD:** They were directionless with you. Since they became members of the NWO, they've been more focused than ever. They are the NWO World tag team champions. What more proof do you need?

**DP:** Last I checked, the letters on those tag belts spelled WCW.

**TD:** There you go again, Page. You're getting bogged down in the minuscule details and ignoring the big picture. NWO for life. We've even got WCW's senior vice president, your buddy Eric Bischoff. That must mean something.

**DP:** The only thing it means is that Bischoff is a traitor to the organization that he helped defend against the NWO. Frankly, WCW has never treated me like the star that I am, but I'm not about to align myself with you.

**TD:** Listen to what you're saying. WCW hasn't treated you like the star that you are. The NWO could.

**DP:** By Hall dropping me on my head during the biggest match of my life?

**TD:** Look, we've been through all that. Think of what we could have done about improving your image.

**DP:** My image is just fine. I may not be the champ right now, but I'll get that U.S. title without your help. Consider that a guarantee. And when I do get it, your boys can line up to try and take it away. They haven't felt nothing until they've felt a "Diamond cutter" from an angry DDP. You'll never get me.

**TD:** I've learned to never say never. Allies and enemies change almost hourly.

**DP:** You heard me. *Never!*

**TD:** You think about what I've said. It's a clear choice. Join now or be overtaken at a later date. Your decision should be a no-brainer.

**DP:** I agree with you. It is a no-brainer. A no-brainer to remain in WCW.

**TD:** Then you'll learn to live with the consequences.

**DP:** So will you. □

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## **Sincerely Yours**

*(Continued from page 5)*

letes their due respect from mainstream wrestling fans.

PHIL DeGREGORY  
Philadelphia, PA

### **STATUS NOT DESERVED**

ECW doesn't deserve world title status, and I don't think INSIDE WRESTLING should even consider giving it to them. To even be considered for the lofty status, I think a promotion should have to have been around for more than five years. The USWA has been around for dozens of years and has never been granted world title status, even though it has promoted cards in more states than ECW has and on a more frequent basis. I think this promotion epitomizes a lot of what is wrong with wrestling. Is it the future of the sport? Well, considering just how quick WCW and WWF have

been to copy the "extreme" style, I guess it is.

I fear for the future of wrestling.  
REBECCA LONGSTEIN  
Dover, DE

### **BAN THE NWO**

I think INSIDE WRESTLING should stop putting members of the New World Order on the cover of this magazine. This is just legitimizing the group. To make matters worse, the NWO also gets feature stories and runs advertisements in this magazine. That just adds to the group's influence and power. How is WCW supposed to get rid of these guys if the NWO is receiving so much support from some of the fans? Doesn't anyone care that the fate of a whole promotion rides on just a few guys who can't get along?

I think the NWO is made up of



Scott Hall and Kevin Nash pose with their WCW World tag team belts. Reader David Quintin wishes we'd stop featuring members of the NWO in our magazines.

a bunch of cowards who don't deserve the credit they get every month in this magazine. Everyone should just boycott their ads, pay-per-views, and matches until they go away.

DAVID QUINTIN  
Cecilia, KY



Joshin Liger was able to return to the ring just a few months after having a benign brain tumor removed this summer. Reader Ben Conrad was inspired by that.

INSPIRATION TO ALL

Jushin Liger deserves to get an award for being the most inspirational wrestler in history ("Jushin Liger's Triumphant Return! 'I Told Chris Benoit To Cripple Me!'" February 1997). It amazes me that he was able to return to the ring just months after having a brain tumor removed. His insistence on returning to the ring so soon afterward shows me that Liger has a real passion for the sport. As a fan, that makes me feel good about what I'm watching. It restores my faith in wrestling.

BEN CONRAD  
Clarksburg, MD □

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INSIDE WRESTLING

## On The Road

(Continued from page 10)

ring apron during the Sid-Shawn Michaels Survivor Series '96 bout.

"You have to wonder, where do they get the courage?" Kowalski asked sarcastically. "Really, though, where's the respect? Do these kids really think they're impressing anyone?"

If you wanted to see impressive, you would've followed Kowalski on the streets as he made his way from the parking lot to the arena on match day. Several fans recognized him and asked him for his autograph. Thirty years ago, Kowalski would have barked and shooed them away, but these days, he appreciates attention and happily signs autographs.

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Lee insists that the next legend he'll destroy is Terry Funk. He didn't do too well against him in an ECW tag team match in November. He needs to forget this "legends obsession."

Okay. A few hours later, Lee took the same route from arena to parking lot and didn't sign a single autograph. Not one, because there wasn't a single request.

Terry Funk says he signs at least 300 autographs a week.

Brian Lee? "I don't think he even knows how to sign his name," Funk quipped. "I betcha he doesn't own a pen."

What's interesting is that these older wrestlers have no fear of insulting Lee, even after what Lee did to Kowalski at the belt presentation. Both these legends are still standing and walking, and both are feeling pretty good. And they should. Both have had Hall of Fame careers.

Lee? He might destroy legends, or at least try to, but he can't make

one out of himself. Right now, the legend of Brian Lee is, "Did you hear about the night when Lee attacked an old man?"

Looks good in print, doesn't it, Lee?

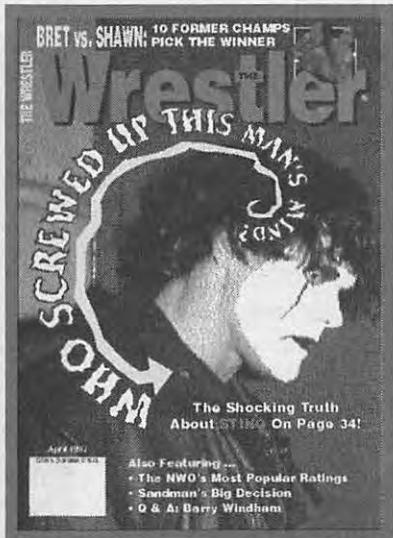
By the way, the new belts are impressive, especially around the waists of The Eliminators. ECW spared no expense in having the belts custom-made, meaning it's a sure bet some wrestler is going to try to steal them very soon. That's the way it works in wrestling. Anybody who has ever dropped a dollar bill in a rulebreakers' dressing room knows that.

One more thing about Lee: There's a dog track in Revere, a suburb of Boston where ECW also runs shows. It's where he belongs. □

# This Month In...



# The Wrestler



The NWO invading the WWF? Only in **HULK HOGAN**'s dreams? We asked him if it was possible, and he said it was! We'll tell you why this isn't as farfetched as it sounds ... It's almost that time of year again. Time for another WrestleMania. So before you look ahead to WrestleMania XIII, you'll want to check out our magazine within a magazine featuring the 20 greatest WrestleMania matches of all-time! ... Were you shocked to hear **SHAWN MICHAELS** get booed at Survivor Series? We were, and we've tried to figure out why the fans may have stabbed him in the back!

All this—and much more!—  
in the Spring 1997 issue of  
*Wrestle America*

**NOW ON SALE!**

**STING**'s face covered by black and white face paint and a blank expression. It's still a very sad, scary sight. He doesn't explain his actions, but prefers to sit alone high above the ring. Was it the **IMPOSTOR STING** debacle that caused this transformation, or a sinister plan by **ERIC BISCHOFF**? ... You probably have opinions about the **SHAWN MICHAELS-BRET HART** feud, but we asked 10 former world champs who they thought would win the next big showdown ... We'll tell you why we think **HULK HOGAN** is booed a lot more than other members of the NWO!

All this—and much more!—  
in the April 1997 issue of  
*The Wrestler*

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## Behind the Door

(Continued from page 12)

the NWO to a bunch of characters in a sitcom, but at least the kids figured out a way to raise \$20,000 and save the house. The NWO, eight million people strong, couldn't even figure out the fastest way to beat up The Giant.

You know, some wrestlers really aren't very bright. Maybe it's from all the knocks they've taken upside the head. Take the NWO. They just keep getting bigger and bigger. Bischoff is so high on himself that he somehow summoned the guts to kick an unconscious Giant. But before long, you know what's going to happen.

That's right, the NWO will be so big that it'll actually be WCW. No longer will there be a splinter outlaw organization. The NWO will have become the status quo. Is that what Bischoff and Hogan want?

And what if the NWO recruits every important member of WCW?

I have one question: Who are they going to wrestle?

If everybody's on one side, who's on the other side?

Are you getting all this?

My point is that the NWO is even more foolish than I previously suspected. They're not only stupid and egotistical, they eat their own.

Bischoff walks around with that swagger of his. He thinks he's cool. People tell me he's an expert in the martial arts.

That tells me one thing: He used to get beaten up a lot in school. Most people who learn the martial arts are those who are tired of getting beaten up. Take one look at Bischoff. You know he got beaten up in school.

Now maybe after watching the *Nitro* tapes, Bischoff will have figured out the right way to fight 10 against one. Then again, maybe

he'll figure it out after reading this column, although I get the idea Bischoff doesn't read this column. Hogan definitely doesn't read this column. He knows I would never say anything good about him, so why bother.

Anyway, a foursome of me, Bill Apter, Dave Lenker, and Brandi Mankiewicz would do a better job on Hogan than the NWO did on The Giant.

We'd at least beat him up all at once! □



Since The Giant became his enemy again, Hulk Hogan has for the most part avoided face-to-face showdowns with The Giant. Smart. If the other members of the NWO are around, get them to help! Don't be ashamed to do so!

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**JULY 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING** is a power-packed 88-page (including four color pinups) that included our popular "Wrestling Cool" section. Who's the coolest dude, babe, crippler, and daredevil? One thing all our readers agreed on: This issue was cool!

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## The Insider

(Continued from page 14)

ster." I recall seeing a fan at ringside who resembles that remark.

Now the big question: Would the NWO be as powerful without Hogan?

I say yes. After all, recent defector Eric "I Love You" Bischoff made his decision after he was at the business end of a Nash "jackknife." Whether Hogan was involved with the NWO at that time, well, I still don't know. But Bischoff seemed to be driven more by fear than by Hogan's presence.

Let's face it: Hogan is a mover and a shaker in this industry, no matter what side of the fence he calls home. But his one downfall is his lack of title defenses. Nothing generates more press and interest than an active, rulebreaking world champion who constantly thumbs his nose at promotional authority and who doesn't mind getting disqualified at the drop of a hat if that's what it takes for him to

retain his belt. Look at Ric Flair, Nick Bockwinkel, and Harley Race.

Let's say Kevin Nash defeated The Giant at Hog Wild before the Giant jumped. As a recent former WWF World champ, he would have garnered almost the same amount of press that Hogan did by winning the title for the NWO. Plus, he would have been more active. He and Hall have a grueling road schedule right now, while Hogan uses his title to play air guitar. Nash, as an active, wisecracking WCW champion would raise the hackles of all pro-WCW wrestlers and fans.

While it's annoying to see Hogan fondling the spray-painted trophy instead of defending it, I find myself still caught up in the novelty of Hogan as a hated rule-breaker. I'm sure other fans do as well. Outside of his past history in the WWF, Hogan was, up until July 7, an entrenched WCW loyalist and fan favorite. Could any other pro-WCW guy have

created the stir that he did that night?

How about Sting? Had Hall and Nash not hooked up with Hogan or gotten someone from outside WCW for Bash at the Beach, they probably would have gotten Sting. Somehow. Some way. What if he wrapped Savage in the Scorpion deathlock on July 7, 1996?

Sting has been in WCW for virtually his entire career. All of his major accomplishments have occurred in WCW. A Sting betrayal would have shifted the balance of power toward the NWO as well.

Think about it. The day after his turn, Sting would have appeared on *Nitro* with the black and white look that he has developed over the past few months. Broadcasters and fellow wrestlers would have lamented the fact that Sting was nothing more than a turncoat. Little "Stingers" would have wept in despair. In addition, if Sting had secured the belt from The Giant for the NWO, he would have also been an active champion. Maybe more active than anyone else on the current roster.

All this speculation is interesting, but it leads me to this point. I believe that within a year, Hulk Hogan will sever his ties to the NWO, though the organization will remain strong. I predict that his dalliance in rulebreaking is just a dalliance. He will long for the cheers of fans and the adoration of youngsters soon enough. The other members will tire of his inactivity and tire of having to cover his rear whenever he calls for them. This will lead Hogan on a direct road back to WCW.

But will WCW ever take Hulk Hogan back? □



I suggest all you fans of Hogan the man who beats up fan favorites and laughs about it afterward enjoy sights like this one while you can, because this time next year, I suspect you'll see him back in the yellow and red.

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2661	Bon Jovi	3442	Fight	7931	Matthew Sweet	7232	Radiohead	8722	Traffic
2731	Breeders	3451	Filter	6321	Meat Puppets	7265	Ramones	8741	Trixter
2766	Brother Cane	3471	Firehouse	6322	Meatloaf	7266	Rancid	8971	Type O Negative
7771	Bruce Springsteen	3663	Foo Fighters	6241	Megadeth	7832	Rod Stewart	8221	U2
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2268	Candlebox	4461	Gin Blossoms	6382	Metallica	7871	Rush	8743	Urge Overkill
2461	Cinderella	4641	Go Go's	6443	Mighty M. Bosstones	7872	Rusted Root	8262	Van Halen
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2727	Crash Test Dummies	4921	GWAR	6721	Mr. Big	7541	Skid Row	9371	Yes
2765	Crowded House	4672	H.O.R.D.E. Tour	6721	Mr. Big	7526	Slash's Snakepit	6251	Yngwie Malmsteen

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## On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)

Austin continued. "The only thing he came back from is a bout with Wild Turkeyitus. I came back from career-threatening injuries and front-office conspiracies. That don't make sense and you know it."

I wanted to remind him that the fans are the ones who decide, but two words left my mouth before I could stop them. "Go on," I said.

"You guys call Ahmed Johnson inspirational? That's a load of crap and you know it. I have inspired every WWF wrestler and fan that's out there. I showed them you don't have to kiss up to get somewhere. I have gone against the grain since I entered this hellhole of a wrestling promotion and singlehandedly raised its TV ratings.

"And I should have had Wrestler of the Year hands-down, too. Who won King of the Ring? Who has dismantled every wrestler that the WWF has put in front of him? 'Stone-Cold,' that's who. Yeah, I don't have a title belt now, but that's because everyone's trying to keep me down. They fear me because I am the greatest of all-time and I don't give a damn about anyone."

I sat there with the phone at my ear in silence.

"You still there, Hunter?"

"Yes," I responded.

"Well, what do you have to say for yourself?" said Austin.

Summoning up all the courage I had, I questioned Austin. "Shouldn't you take this issue up with the fans?"

"The fans? They don't know jack about wrestling or anything else for that matter," he said. "Allowing them to decide is just

all about," I responded.

"Fine," Austin said. "Then give me that Editors' Award that you gave to that fossil Danny Hodge. I have done more in my seven years than he has done in his 700 years. In fact, you ought to rename the award after me."

Austin was rambling now. I dare say that if we still had awards for Lady Wrestler of the Year or Midget Wrestler of the Year, he'd bring up an argument as to why he should have won those, too.

"What do you want me to say, Steve?" I asked of him.

"I want you and all your editors to pull your heads out of the sand and have the guts to give me some credit. Put my picture on the cover and the sales will skyrocket. Make sure those fans vote right in 1997 and give me what I deserve. Because I will prove that I can beat Bret Hart, and I will go on to be the WWF champion. Bank on it, Hunter, because that's the bottom line."

With that, Austin hung up the telephone. I looked at the clock. Only 10 minutes had passed. I would have guessed we had been on the phone for two hours.

I don't deny Steve Austin's greatness or his potential to get even better. I just wish he'd call the INSIDE WRESTLING offices once in a while if he has a complaint and not my home. Let him go one-on-one with our new renegade, Ms. Mankiewicz.

In the meantime, I need to prepare for the coming year. First order of business: Get Caller I.D. □



One big match that "Stone-Cold" lost this year was to Bret Hart at Survivor Series ... and he dominated most of that. He expects to be voted PWI's Wrestler of the Year for '97 after he destroys Hart and wins the WWF title.

plain stupid. You all are supposed to be the experts. If the fans do something idiotic and foolish, you should be there to cover them."

"But that's what the awards are

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**April 1987**/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.  
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**November 1988**/Stories include: Rhodes, Kerry, Luger, Muraco, Freebirds.  
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**February 1991**/Stories include: Taylor, Hogan, Martel, Sting.  
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**November 1991**/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Luger, Flair, War Games.  
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**November 1992**/Stories include: Flair, Warrior, Vader, top ror:2 rule.  
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**November 1994**/Stories include: DiBiase, Sting, Diesel, Cactus-Sabu.  
**December 1994**/Stories include: Hogan, Bret, Rottens, Cactus, AAA midgets.  
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**February 1995**/Stories include: Sting, McMahon-Lawler, Woman, Brutus-Hogan.  
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**May 1995**/Stories include: Michaels, Mabel, Diesel, Undertaker, Hogan.  
**June 1995**/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy.  
**August 1995**/Stories include: Badd, Bigelow, Studd, Bubba-Sting.  
**September 1995**/Stories include: Vicious, Flair-Hogan, Severn, Mabel.  
**November 1995**/Stories include: Hogan, Wright, Tatanka, Backlund-Clinton.  
**December 1995**/Stories include: Undertaker, Vader, Renegade, Gangstas-PE.  
**January 1996**/Stories include: Norton, Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio.  
**February 1996**/Stories include: 1996 predictions, Goldust, Sherri-Parker.  
**April 1996**/Stories include: Diesel, Kid, Savage-Sting-Luger-Hogan.  
**May 1996**/Stories include: Austin, Public Enemy, Vader, Sasaki, weirdness.

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# MADMAN 0

Could the erratic behavior of Jake "The Snake" Roberts mean he's close to another nervous breakdown? Or is his behavior just the foundation for a plan so twisted and devious that only a brilliant strategist could have imagined it?

By Chris Bernucca

**T**HE SCENE: A WWF card in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Jake Roberts challenges a suspended Randy Savage to meet him in the ring. Savage, rusty from inactivity, foolishly accepts the challenge and soon finds himself entwined in the ropes, a bite victim of Roberts' 14-foot king cobra.

Was Roberts' behavior the act of a madman, or a genius?

The scene: Tuesday In Texas. Roberts feigns serious injury after losing to the reinstated Savage. He then ambushes Savage, delivering a series of DDTs that render the "Macho Man" nearly unconscious. When Elizabeth comes to Savage's rescue, Roberts slaps her. Later, when Savage is told what happened, he is speechless with rage.

What about this time? Genius? Or madman?

One thing is for sure: Nobody knows what Jake Roberts is going to do next—including Jake Roberts. Even if he did, he isn't saying.

Why should he? Right now, Roberts' instability makes him the most feared wrestler in the WWF. His tactics, however insane they may be, have allowed him to climb back up the rankings, re-



Jake Roberts may have perpetrated his most despicable act when he slapped Elizabeth at Tuesday In Texas. Either he "lost it" for a moment, or knew exactly what he was doing.

establishing himself as a legitimate contender to the title.

"No one—I mean NO ONE—talks to him in the dressing room," said one WWF rulebreaker who requested anonymity. "There's usually some chatter going on, but when Jake walks in, everyone goes silent. Most wrestlers would

be bothered by that, because it gives the impression that people are talking behind your back. But Jake eats it up. He goes to his locker and sits there with this sly grin on his face, then he breaks into this sick laugh. It's scary."

To those who have a better understanding of the human mind,

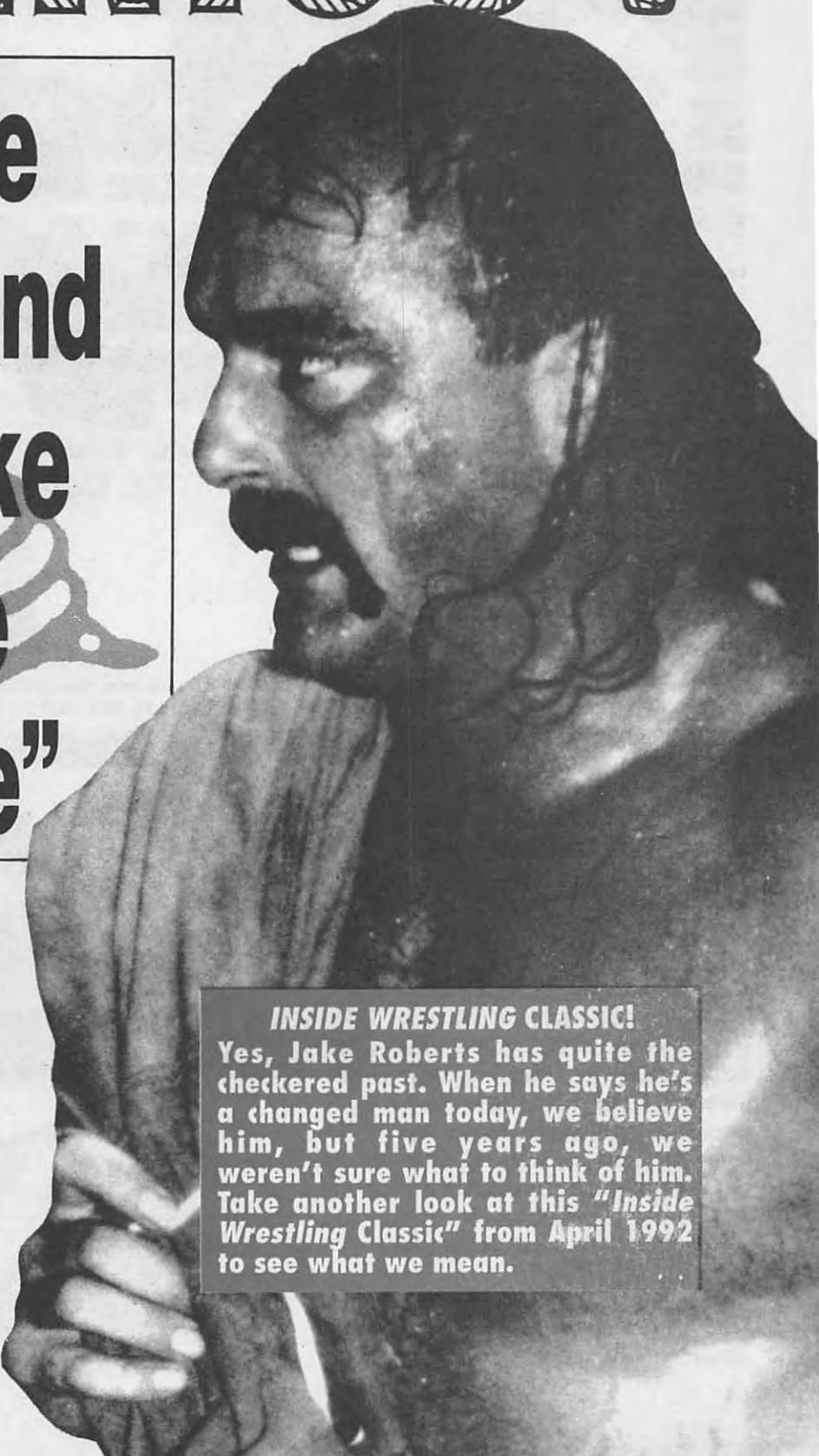
# IS HE A GENIUS?

## Inside The Mind Of Jake “The Snake”

it's more than scary—it's downright insane. At least that's the opinion of Dr. Sidney M. Basil, who has followed Roberts' behavior very closely.

"In layman's terms, Jake Roberts is losing his mind," said Basil. "His emotions seem to be in firm control of his power of reason. Both of the recent incidents seem to be a call for attention, a cry for help that is indicative of low self-esteem.

"The dominant emotion appears to be jealousy, which in Roberts is almost obsessive in nature. He appears to be extremely jealous of



### INSIDE WRESTLING CLASSIC!

Yes, Jake Roberts has quite the checkered past. When he says he's a changed man today, we believe him, but five years ago, we weren't sure what to think of him. Take another look at this "Inside Wrestling Classic" from April 1992 to see what we mean.



Targeting Sid Justice (above) may turn out to be Roberts' biggest blunder ever.

the ideals that Savage stands for, such as strong sense of family, love, and friendship. Savage is also well-liked, and Roberts may be jealous of that as well."

Roberts is married, so it is unlikely that his sadistic behavior is a call for attention from Elizabeth. But without knowing the quality of Roberts' relationship with his wife Cheryl at this stage, it is quite possible that he may be jealous of the love Savage and Elizabeth have for each other.

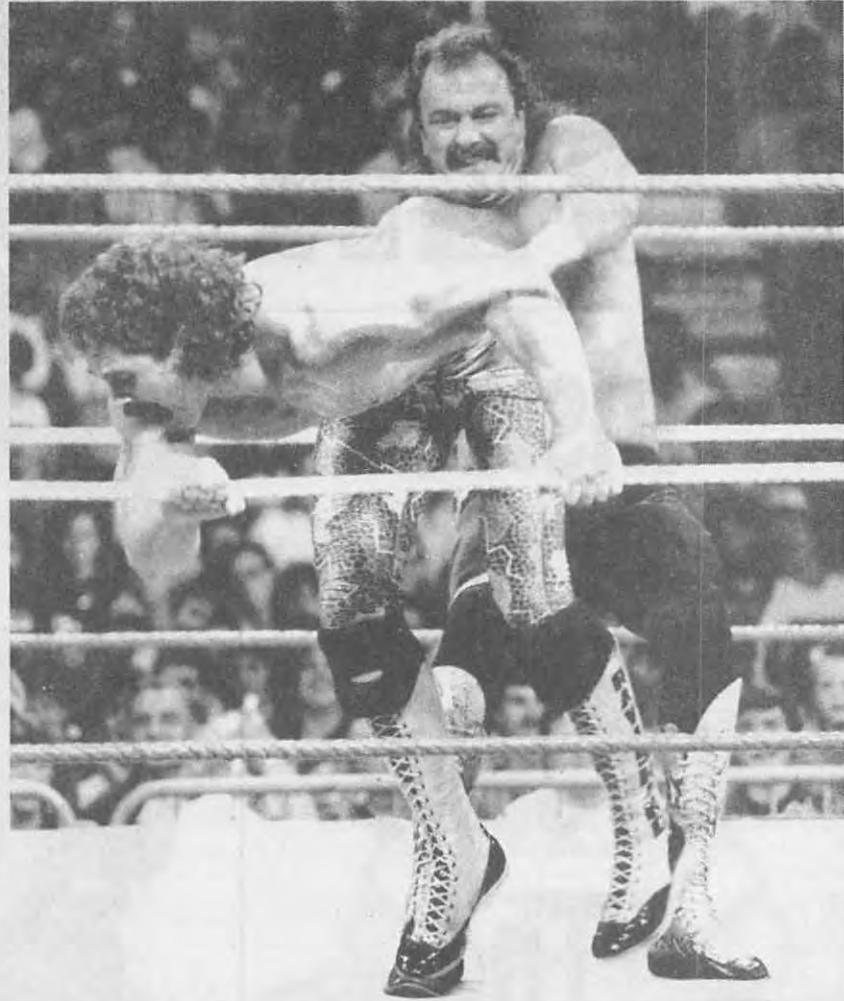
"Roberts is so obsessed with destroying Savage, he is unaware that he is destroying himself," the doctor added. "He has a fragile psyche, and his mental history shows that he is capable of breaking down. Failure in achieving his goal could lead to another breakdown."

Ten years ago, Roberts joined Kevin Sullivan's stable (instable?). He received several NWA title bouts against Ric Flair, and also feuded fiercely with Barry Windham. The pressure became too much for Roberts, who left Sullivan's group—and immediately suffered a nervous breakdown.

So Roberts is headed for the nut house.

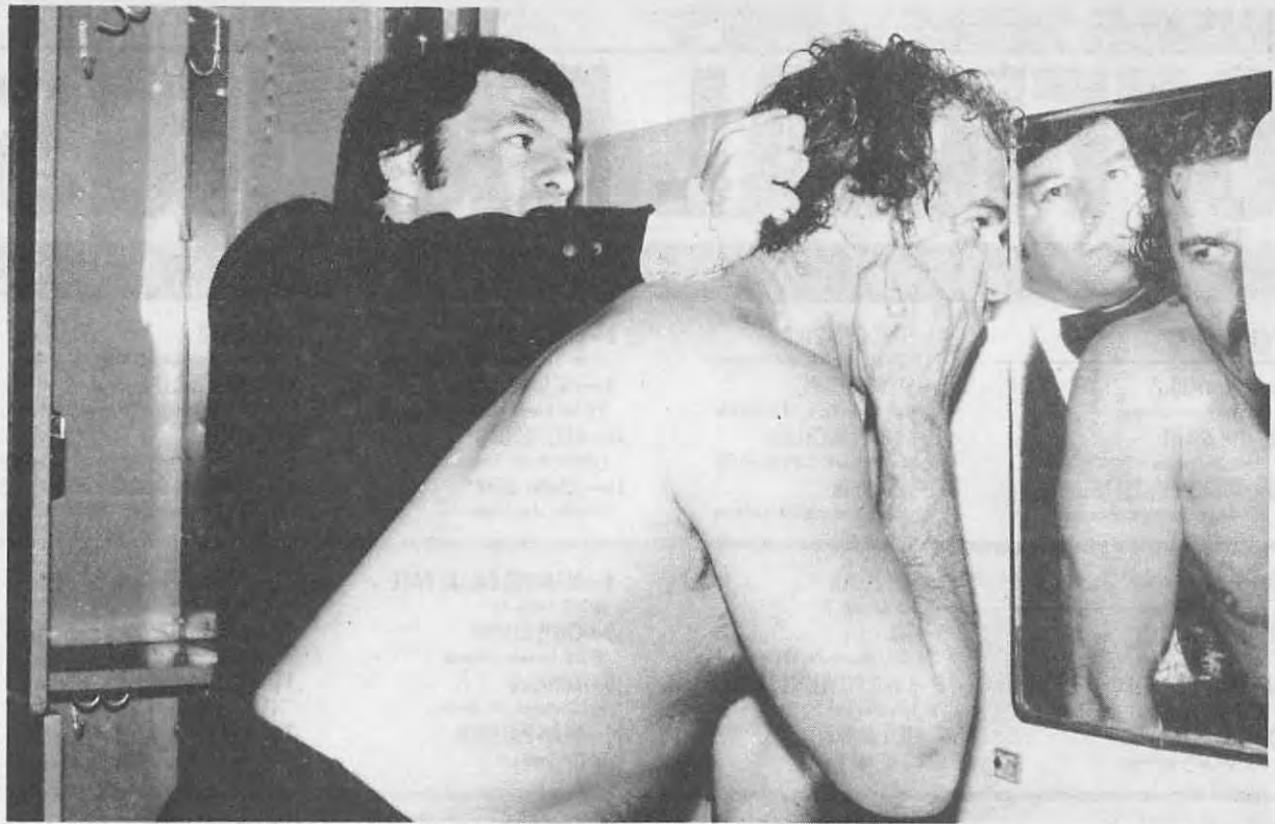
Or is he?

In 1987, Roberts became embroiled in a heated feud with Rick

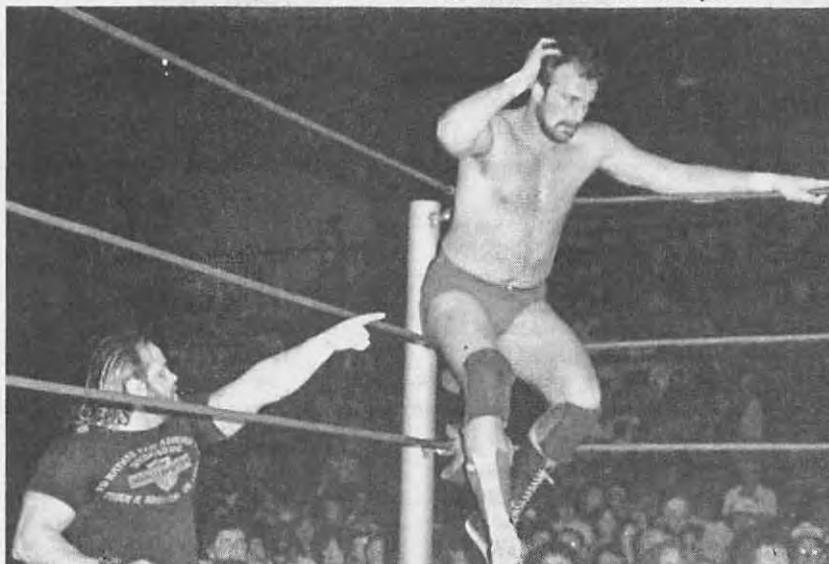


Roberts was cheered by the fans, though he really hadn't changed, when he feuded with Rick Rude (above). For years, he's used his snake to humiliate opponents (below).





Paul Jones couldn't control "The Snake" (above); neither could Kevin Sullivan (below). Roberts has taken full responsibility for his own career, with dire consequences.



Rude when the "Ravishing One" tried to kiss Cheryl on national television. Roberts wanted to crush Rude, but was frustrated when Rude battled him to a time-limit draw at Wrestlemania IV the following year.

The feud became full-scale war when Rude began wearing tights with Cheryl's face on them in an obvious attempt to distract Rob-

erts. Initially, Roberts was flustered and had trouble concentrating on matches. But he used Cheryl as a rallying point, bringing her to ring-side for inspiration. The plan worked, and Roberts eventually won the feud.

"WCW keeps me busy enough," said Rude. "I don't have time to keep up on feuds I'm not involved in. But from what I re-

member about my battle with Roberts, he went nuts after I laid my lips on his lady."

Roberts may be using his own experience to turn the tables on Savage. Perhaps "The Snake" remembers how distracted he was when Rude went after Cheryl, and is trying to distract Savage by going after Elizabeth.

"It's a brilliant plan, if it is a plan," the anonymous rulebreaker said. "Once you get your opponent thinking about stuff other than wrestling, you have the advantage. And Savage is definitely thinking about stuff other than wrestling."

No one can definitely say what Roberts is thinking about—not even The Undertaker, who is the closest thing Roberts has to a friend. The two have paired up for tag team matches against Savage and Hulk Hogan. But even this may be a ploy by Roberts to get closer to the WWF World title, which he has never won.

"He is," Dr. Basil said, "a sick individual who needs professional help." □

# OFFICIAL RATINGS

## TOP 15

**1—SID VICIOUS**  
(1) WWF World champion

**2—THE GIANT**  
(9) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

**3—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**  
(3) WWF Intercontinental champion

**4—EDDY GUERRERO**  
(-) WCW U.S. heavyweight champion

**5—STEVE AUSTIN**  
(8) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

**6—SHAWN MICHAELS**  
(6) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

**7—LEX LUGER**  
(2) No. 3 contender: WCW World title

**8—BRET HART**  
(5) No. 5 contender: WWF World title

**9—THE UNDERTAKER**  
(10) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

**10—HULK HOGAN**  
(-) WCW World champion

**11—JUSHIN LIGER**  
(-) Holder of eight belts

**12—RAVEN**  
(11) ECW heavyweight champion

**13—DEAN MALENKO**  
(4) No. 1 contender: WCW cruiserweight title

**14—GOLDUST**  
(-) No. 1 contender: WWF Intercontinental title

**15—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**  
(15) No. 7 contender: WCW World title

## WCW

**1—HULK HOGAN**  
(1) 275, Venice Beach, CA

**2—EDDY GUERRERO**  
(13) 221, El Paso, TX

**3—THE GIANT**  
(10) 430, parts unknown

**4—LEX LUGER**  
(2) 265, Chicago, IL

**5—SIX**  
(15) 212, Minneapolis, MN

**6—LORD STEVEN REGAL**  
(4) 247, Blackpool, England

**7—JEFF JARRETT**  
(11) 230, Nashville, TN

**8—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**  
(6) 260, Tampa, FL

**9—CHRIS BENOIT**  
(9) 218, Edmonton, Alberta

**10—KONNAN**  
(-) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

**11—DEAN MALENKO**  
(3) 216, Tampa, FL

**12—REY MISTERIO JR.**  
(7) 140, San Diego, CA

**13—ARN ANDERSON**  
(14) 249, Minneapolis, MN

**14—BUBBA ROGERS**  
(-) 310, Cobb County, GA

**15—PSICOSIS**  
(-) 200, Tijuana, Mexico

## WWF

**1—SID VICIOUS**  
(1) 318, West Memphis, AR

**2—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**  
(2) 279, Greenwich, CT

**3—STEVE AUSTIN**  
(5) 241, Dallas, TX

**4—THE UNDERTAKER**  
(6) 328, parts unknown

**5—SHAWN MICHAELS**  
(4) 234, San Antonio, TX

**6—BRET HART**  
(3) 235, Calgary, Alberta

**7—AHMED JOHNSON**  
(-) 255, Pearl River, MS

**8—FAAROOQ**  
(8) 260, Perry, GA

**9—MARC MERO**  
(7) 235, Buffalo, NY

**10—MANKIND**  
(9) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM

**11—GOLDUST**  
(12) 254, Austin, TX

**12—BIG VAN VADER**  
(11) 450, Denver, CO

**13—FLASH FUNK**  
(10) 222, Denver, CO

**14—ROCKY MAIVIA**  
(13) 272, Pearl City, HI

**15—CRUSH**  
(-) 322, Kona, HI

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**2—THE GIANT**  
Last issue: unrated

**3—AHMED JOHNSON**  
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**4—LEX LUGER**  
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**5—SHAWN MICHAELS**  
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**6—THE UNDERTAKER**  
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**9—EDDY GUERRERO**  
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Last issue: unrated

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Last issue: No. 15 Most Popular

**15—CHRIS JERICHO**  
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**1—HULK HOGAN**  
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated

**2—STEVE AUSTIN**  
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**3—SCOTT HALL**  
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**11—SID VICIOUS**  
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular

**12—RAVEN**  
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**13—MANKIND**  
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated

**14—SHANE DOUGLAS**  
Last issue: No. 12 Most Hated

**15—J.C. ICE**  
Last issue: unrated

## TOP 15 TAG TEAMS

**1—OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH**  
(1) WWF World tag team champions

**2—SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH**  
(2) WCW World tag team champions

**3—HARLEM HEAT**  
(6) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

**4—DOUG FURNAS & PHIL LAFON**  
(5) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

**5—HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN**  
(9) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

**6—THE ELIMINATORS**  
(10) ECW tag team champions

**7—THE BARBARIAN & MENG**  
(3) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

**8—THE GANGSTAS**  
(8) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title

**9—NEW DIESEL & NEW RAZOR RAMON**  
(4) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

**10—THE NASTY BOYS**  
(7) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title

**11—PUBLIC ENEMY**  
(14) No. 4 contenders: WCW World tag title

**12—STEVEN DUNN & FLASH FLANAGAN**  
(11) USWA tag team champions

**13—THE AMAZING FRENCH-CANADIANS**  
(-) No. 5 contenders: WCW World tag title

**14—THE HEADBANGERS**  
(-) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

**15—SEX & VIOLENCE**  
(-) Holders of four titles

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue... "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended January 15, 1997

## ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: KENTA KOBASHI  
(July 24, 1996; from Akira Taue; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: YOSHINARI OGAWA  
(September 3, 1995; from Dan Kroffat; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: KENTA KOBASHI  
(July 24, 1996; from Akira Taue; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S ALL-PACIFIC CHAMPION: TAKAKO INOU  
(November 21, 1996; from Reggie Bennett; Kobe, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: RIE TAMADA  
(November 21, 1996; from Kumiko Maekawa; Kobe, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:  
CHIKAYA NAGASHIMA & SUGAR SATO  
(September 1, 1996; from Yumi Fukawa & Rie Tamada; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-STATE WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: THE BLACK ASSASSIN  
(October 21, 1995; from Billy Orderly; Fountain City, TN)

ALL-STATE WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: E.F. HUTTON & ERIC ROSE  
(June 14, 1996; from Alex & Felix Hutton; Maryville, TN)

ECW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RAVEN  
(December 7, 1996; from The Sandman; Philadelphia, PA)

ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ELIMINATORS  
(December 20, 1996; from The Gangstas; Middletown, NY)

ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: SHANE DOUGLAS  
(July 13, 1996; from Chris Jericho; Philadelphia, PA)

IWGP HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHINYA HASHIMOTO  
(April 29, 1996; from Nobuhiko Takada; Tokyo, Japan)

IWGP TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TATSUMI FUJINAMI & KENGO KIMURA  
(January 4, 1997; from Masa Chono & Hiroyoshi Tenzan; Tokyo, Japan)

IPWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BIG SLAM  
(January 11, 1997; beat Guido Falcone; Pikeville, NC)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:  
ADAM FLASH  
(December 1, 1996; from Steve Corino; Baltimore, MD)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION MID-ATLANTIC CHAMPION: JIMMY CICERO  
(December 1, 1996; from Boo Bradley; Baltimore, MD)

NWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN SEVERN  
(February 24, 1995; from Chris Candido; Erlanger, KY)

NWA NORTH AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RECKLESS YOUTH  
(September 7, 1996; beat Derek Domino; Yardville, NJ)

NWA U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE LOST BOYS  
(December 7, 1996; from Downward Spiral; Mount Holly, NJ)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION: KENTA KOBASHI  
(July 24, 1996; from Akira Taue; Tokyo, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:  
JOHNNY ACE & STEVE WILLIAMS  
(September 5, 1996; from Jun Akiyama & Mitsuhiro Misawa; Tokyo, Japan)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: FREIGHT  
TRAIN JONES  
(November 1, 1996; from Mark Mest; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:  
PAT SHAMROCK  
(January 11, 1997; from Diablos Macabre; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: ACE DARLING  
& MARK MEST  
(December 27, 1996; from Double Delight; Reading, PA)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ITALIAN STALLION  
(December 15, 1996; from George South; Charlotte, NC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MADD MAXXINE  
(August 24, 1996; beat Black Angel; Forest City, NC)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: THE OUTPATIENT  
(June 14, 1996; from Jimmy Sharpe; Rossville, GA)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHUCK COLT & RICK JUSTICE  
(May 10, 1996; from The New One Man Gang & Joel Travis; Rossville, GA)

USWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JERRY LAWLER  
(November 16, 1996; from The Colorado Kid; Memphis, TN)

USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: BRIAN CHRISTOPHER  
(January 2, 1997; from Wolfe D; Memphis, TN)

USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: FLASH FLANAGAN & STEVEN DUNN  
(January 9, 1997; beat Mike Samples & Vic the Bruiser; Memphis, TN)

WCW CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPION: ULTIMO DRAGON  
(December 29, 1996; from Dean Malenko; Nashville, TN)

WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: LORD STEVEN REGAL  
(August 20, 1996; from Lex Luger; Dalton, GA)

WCW U.S. CHAMPION: EDDY GUERRERO  
(December 29, 1996; beat Dallas Page in tournament final; Nashville, TN)

WCW WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN  
(August 10, 1996; from The Giant; Sturgis, SD)

WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH  
(October 27, 1996; from Harlem Heat; Las Vegas, NV)

WCW WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: AKIRA HOKUTO  
(December 29, 1996; beat Madusa in tournament final; Nashville, TN)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: THE ICON  
(December 7, 1996; from East L.A. Angel; Woodbury, NJ)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE HIMALAYAN PLAYERS  
(December 7, 1996; won tournament; Woodbury, NJ)

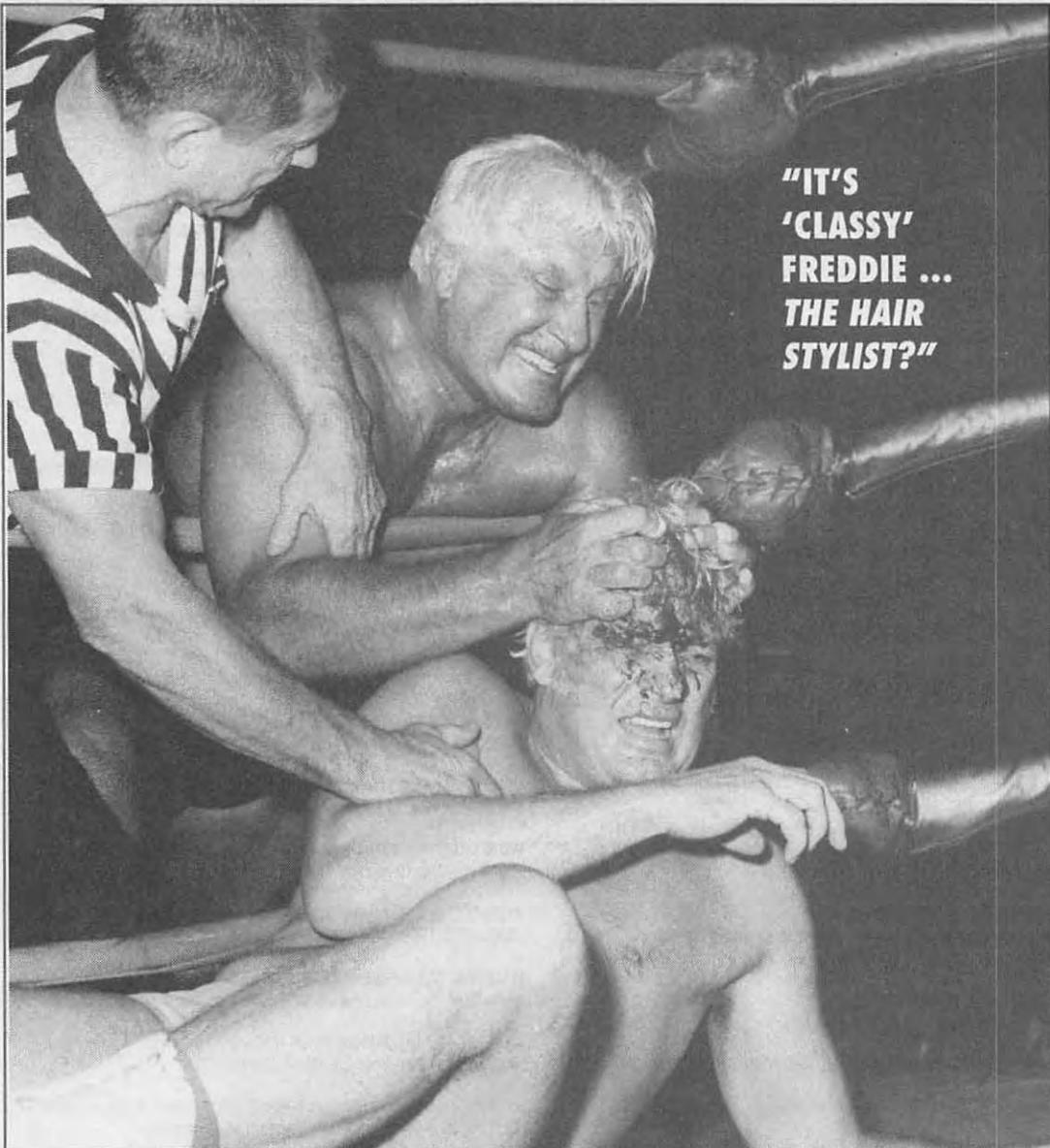
WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY  
(October 21, 1996; from Marc Mero; Fort Wayne, IN)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: "PSYCHO" SID VICIOUS  
(November 17, 1996; from Shawn Michaels; New York, NY)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH  
(September 22, 1996; from The Smokin' Gunns; Philadelphia, PA)

# BLAST FROM THE PAST

## This Month In Wrestling History



**"IT'S  
'CLASSY'  
FREDDIE ...  
THE HAIR  
STYLIST?"**

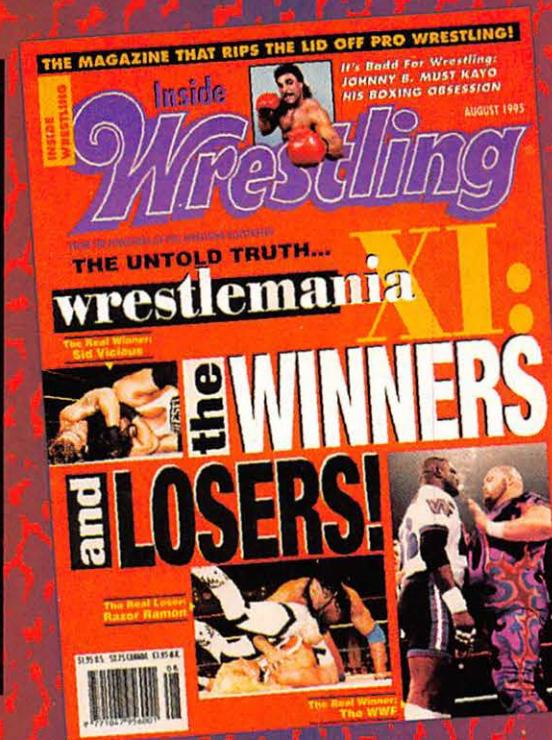
### **FRED BLASSIE vs. DON CARSON**

**April 1970**

Well, it does *sorta* look like Blassie is styling the hair of Don Carson, but the sight of all that blood gushing down Carson's forehead kind of lets you know that this is something much more serious. This is Blassie's way of telling Carson that he definitely does not want to be his tag team partner anymore. Carson got the message. And he probably wished that Blassie had a more subtle way of getting his point across.

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